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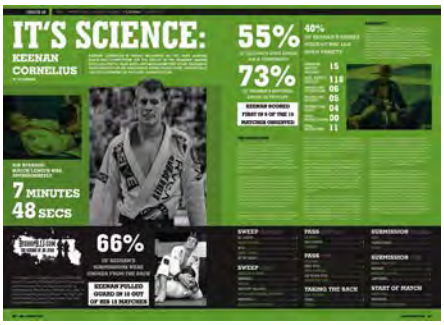

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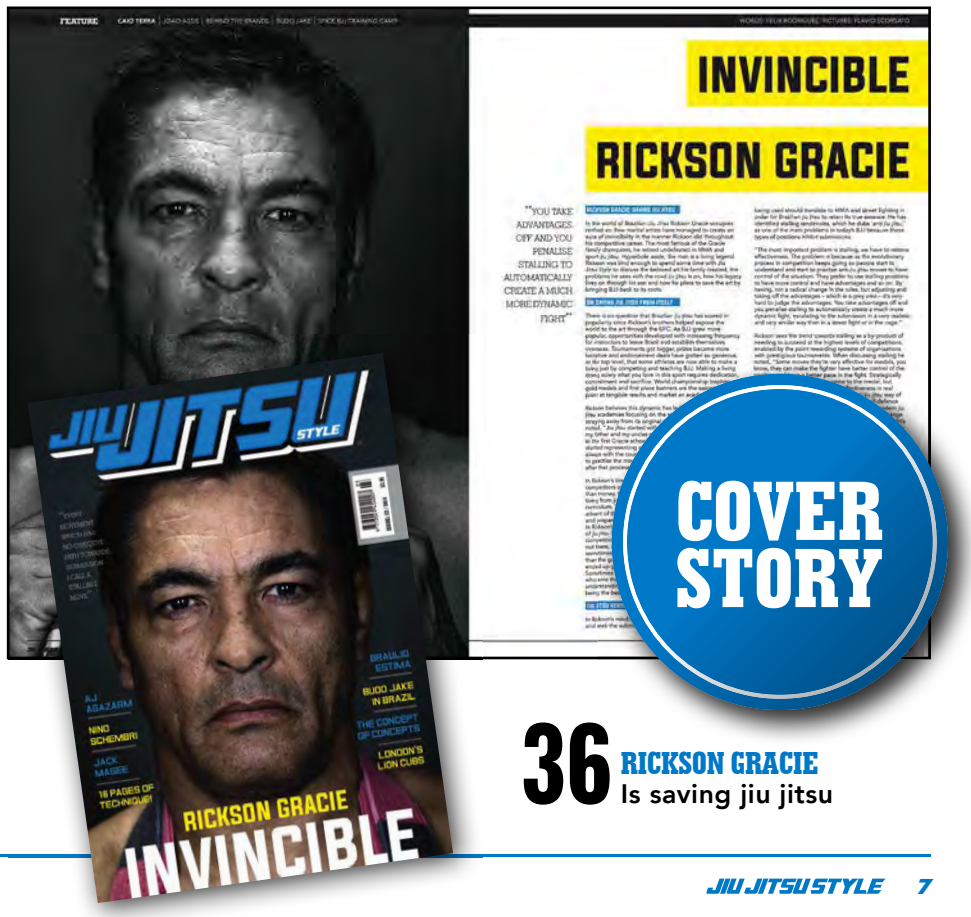

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Is saving jiu jitsu

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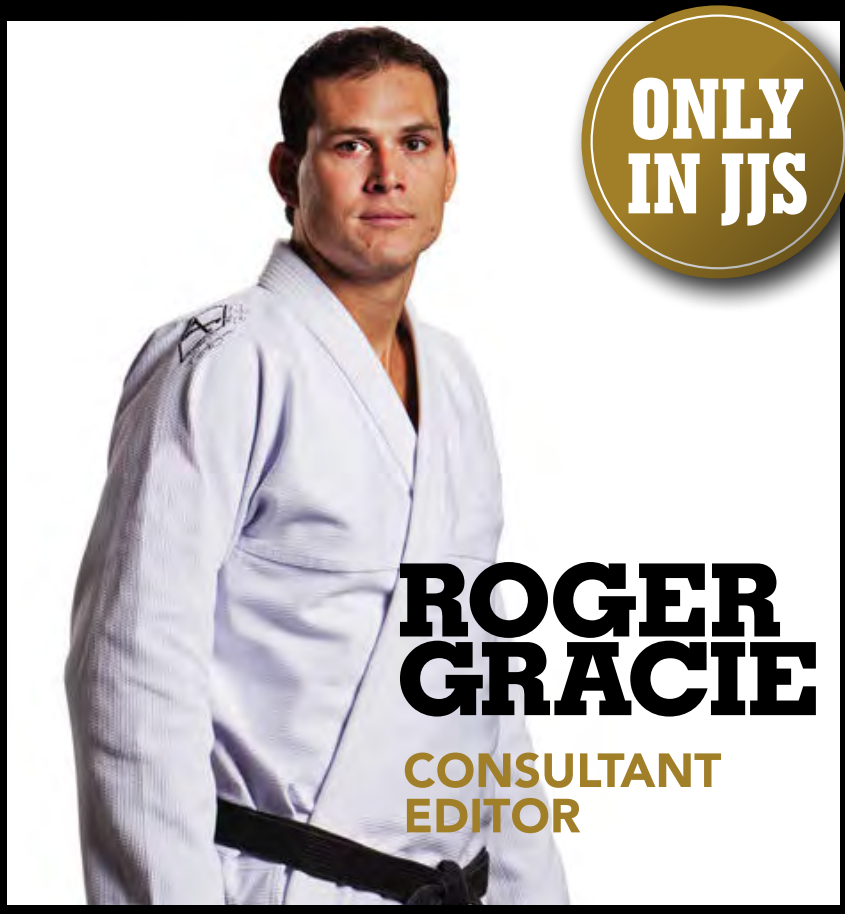

It's an absolute pleasure to have Rickson Gracie as our latest cover star. Rickson is a man that obviously needs no introduction, and is widely regarded as one of the greatest jiu jitsu fighters of all time. I think he is a man we can all take some inspiration from, and it's great to see he is taking such an active role in improving the competition scene. Whether you agree with him or not, it's great to hear his opinions!

> "I HELD MY FIRST EVER SUMMER CAMP IN MALAGA, SPAIN, WHICH WAS A GREAT SUCCESS AND A LOT OF FUN"

Late October saw the return of the London International Open and the standard of jiu jitsu on display was extremely high. With the European Championships just around the corner, it looks like everyone is training hard ready for the start of the gi competition season.

The IBJJF World Nogi was another great event, and a special mention must go to Yuri Simoes on his double gold victory. We've got a great selection of photos from the event in our tournament review, so make sure you check it out.

I am delighted that we have been able to publish our recent interview with my friend, Nino Schembri, in our last issue of 2014. Nino is one of the best guard players ever, and a legend from the golden era at Gracie Barra HQ during its time in Brazil. Nino has had some amazing experiences in both sport jiu jitsu and mixed martial arts, so this interview is a must read.

My black belt Nick Brooks' technique series within this issue is one of my favourites to date, as he showcases some knee-on-belly attacks. For those of you who don't know, my father, Mauricio Gomes, is known for his horrible knee-on-belly, with many tough guys tapping from his knee-ride position! Make sure you have a look at what Nick has picked up from my father over the years.

On a personal note, I have been training steadily ahead of my return to mixed martial arts, and I am really looking forward to stepping into the cage and back to competition. It has been some time since my last fight and I can't wait for the opportunity to get back to winning ways.

It's been a busy couple of months for me, teaching seminars all over the world and training at home in the UK. I held my first ever summer camp in Malaga, Spain, which was a great success and a lot of fun. I also travelled all the way to Singapore for a seminar at Evolve MMA, and it was great to meet new jiu jitsu enthusiasts training in Asia.

In closing, as we approach the end of the year, I'd like to wish everyone well going into 2015 and I hope to see everyone ready to roll in Lisbon in January!

I hope you like the latest issue of the magazine and – until next time – keep training and enjoying jiu jitsu.

ROGER GRACIE

manto

×

KRAZY DEE

fall/winter '14

photo: KID by Guy Lowndes

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THE BIG PICTURE

Yuri Simoes celebrates jubilantly after beating Keenan Cornelius on the way to winning double gold at the IBJJF World Nogi Championships.

PICTURE: WILLIAM BURKHARDT

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NEWSROOM

#RENZOGRACIE #SAKURABA #GRACIEHUNTER #METAMORIS #OLDSCHOOL

RENZO FACES SAKURABA AT METAMORIS 5

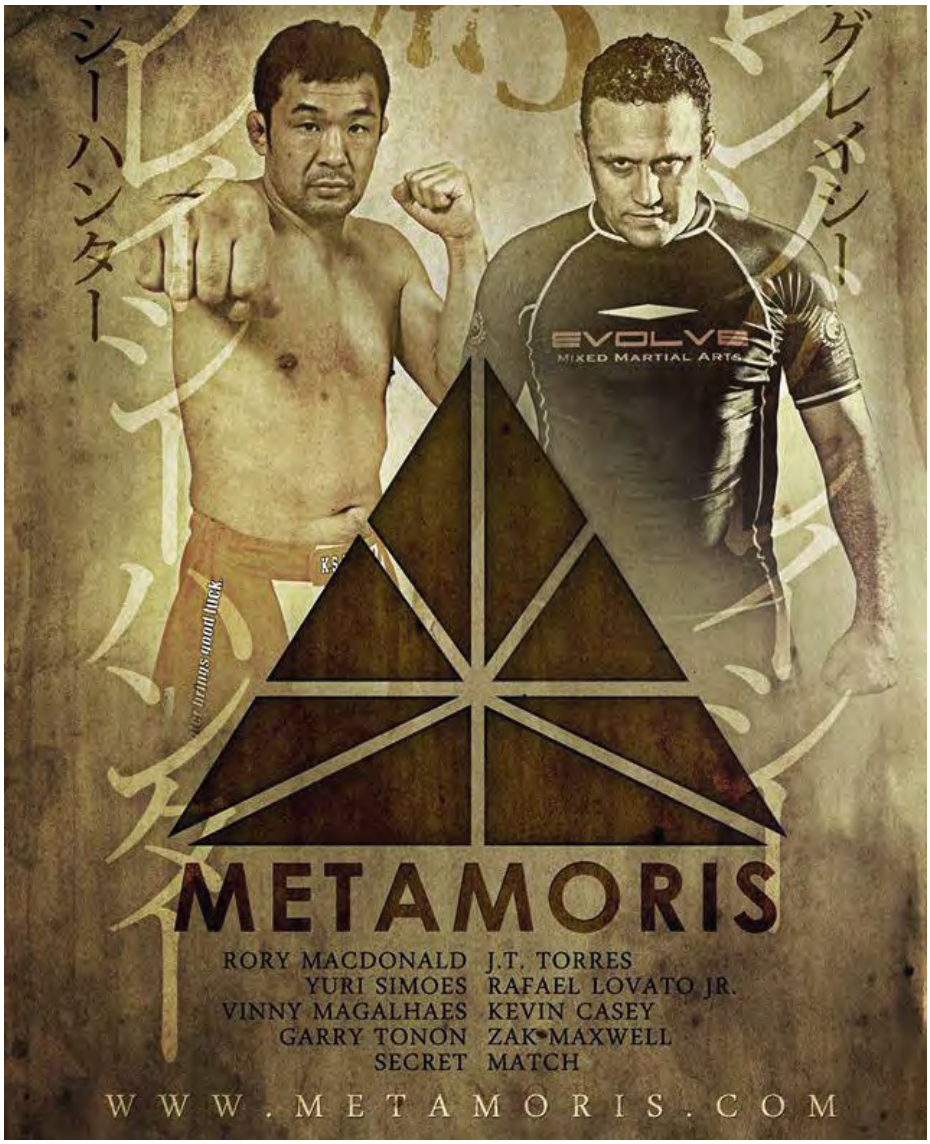
The first encounter between Kazushi Sakuraba and Renzo Gracie at PRIDE 10 ranks among the most memorable matches in mixed martial arts. Before Sakuraba, the Gracie family had an aura of invincibility. While they had lost a number of times in their history back in Brazil, from the late '80s onwards Rorion successfully marketed his family to an international audience as undefeated.

Back in the 1950s Helio Gracie had lost to Masahiko Kimura, an event sealed in jiu jitsu history by the submission that has borne his name ever since. By besting a Gracie, Sakuraba laid claim to Kimura's mantle. At last, the Japanese had a new hero to reclaim jiu jitsu from the Brazilians. By defeating Royler, Royce and Renzo (he would later add Ryan to that list as well), Sakuraba cemented his status as the 'Gracie Hunter'.

Famously, Renzo hung a picture of the moment Sakuraba broke his arm, prominently on display at his New York academy. Whereas most fighters would prefer to remember their victories, for Renzo it was this defeat that warranted commemoration. At Metamoris 5 he will have the chance to avenge that loss 14 years ago, albeit under grappling rules.

In a stacked card (though unfortunately there are yet again no women competing), Renzo and Sakuraba top the bill. In the other bouts, Rory MacDonald faces JT Torres, Yuri Simoes takes on Rafael Lovato Jr, Kevin Casey returns to fight Vinny Magalhaes and the ever-exciting Garry Tonon goes up against Zak Maxwell. Just like last time, there will also be a 'secret match'.

The action all takes place on the 22nd November at the Long Beach Convention Centre. Commentary will once again come from Kenny Florian and Jeff Glover, with a live stream available from Metamoris.com. Perhaps there will soon be a new picture to grace the wall of Renzo's school.



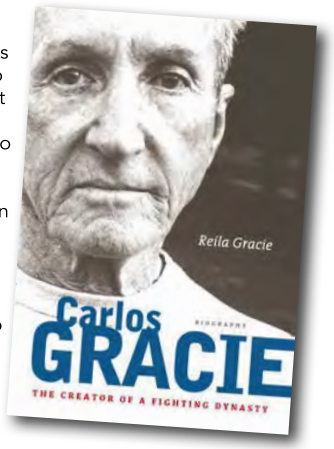
#CARLOSGRACIE #CREATOR #REILAGRACIE

CARLOS GRACIE BOOK FINALLY AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

Carlos Gracie: O Criador Uma Dinastia was originally published five years ago, written by Carlos Gracie's daughter (and Roger Gracie's mother) Reila Gracie. The book is a biography of the Gracie patriarch, but surprisingly, given the relationship between the author and its subject, the book is far from hagiographic. Reila pulls no punches in her depiction of Carlos Gracie's colourful life story.

Ever since the Portuguese version hit the market, the large English-speaking BJJ community outside of Brazil has eagerly awaited a translation. After all this time, it seemed like it was never going to happen. There were even allegations that other members of the Gracie family were actively suppressing the translation due to the explosive material contained within.

Whatever the case, the English translation is finally here, with signed copies of *Carlos Gracie: The Creator of a Fighting Dynasty* available from Budovideos. Although its thunder has to an extent been stolen by the revelations in Roberto Pedreira's *Choque* (a second volume of his book is set for next year), it's still the biggest news in BJJ publishing for a long time.



#POLARIS #PROFESSIONALJIUJITSU #SUBMISSIONONLY #EUROPEANBJJ

POLARIS PROFESSIONAL JIU JITSU INVITATIONAL

At last, professional jiu jitsu has arrived in Europe! Following on from the success of promotions such as Metamoris Pro and Copa Podio, the Polaris Jiu Jitsu Invitational is set to launch on January 10th in Cardiff, Wales.

Polaris' debut show will be held at St. David's Hall, seating 1,800 spectators who will witness an awesome night of submission only BJJ. "We thought it was about time that Europe had a top quality, professional jiu jitsu event that fans could really get excited about," says a Polaris official representative. "We are planning on creating a great spectacle for both the fans in attendance and for those who purchase the online stream. We've worked really hard on the fight card, and it's created plenty of buzz online already.

"We hope that Polaris will become a real showpiece event within the jiu jitsu calendar, offering elite fighters a great platform to ply their trade and gain the exposure they deserve. You can count the number of exciting grappling events out there on one hand, so our aim is for Polaris to become a real showpiece for Brazilian jiu jitsu."

The full fight line-up includes:

JT TORRES vs VICTOR ESTIMA

DEAN LISTER vs PABLO POPOVITCH

MIKE FOWLER vs EDUARDO TELLES

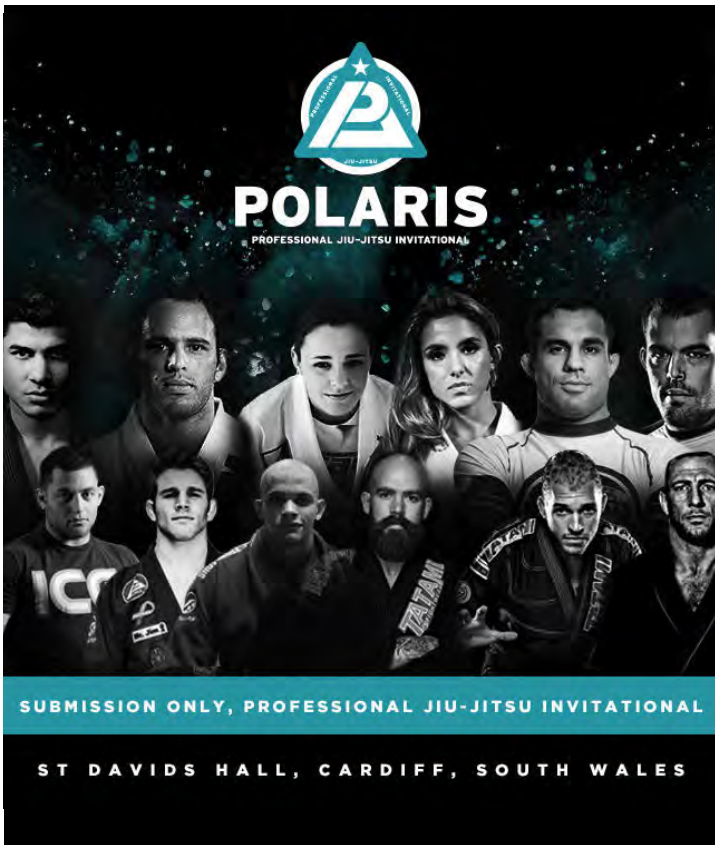
AJ AGAZARM vs DANIEL STRAUSS

KIT DALE vs VICTOR SILVEIRO

MICHELLE NICOLINI vs ANGELICA GALVAO

There are two more matches that were unconfirmed at the time of going to print.

For more information and to book your tickets visit: www.polaris-pro.org



#COPAPODIO #MIDDLEWEIGHTS #LEANDROLO #PROJIUJITSU

COPA PODIO 3RD MIDDLEWEIGHT GRAND PRIX ON 22ND NOVEMBER

On the same day as the next Metamoris, the prominent Copa Podio professional BJJ tournament series will also be holding an event. The maximum weight for the middleweight fighters is 86kg. Among them several big names have already signed up, including Claudio Calasans. Along with the ten-person Grand Prix, there are several other fights, including some intriguing submission only bouts. Gianni Grippo will be facing Joao Miyao under nogi sub only rules, while Leandro Lo takes on Gilbert Durinho in a gi equivalent. Head to copapodio.com for more information about the live stream, along with a chance to catch up on previous events.

Pictures: Hywel Teague

Taylor Pearman (Navy Elite)
European Nogi Champion 2012
European Champion 2013

Sam Gibson (Black Elite)
British Featherweight Champion 2013
British Absolute Champion
European Nogi Champion 2013

Dickie Martin (White Leve)
2013 champion
of London, New York, Rome and Munich

Lee Renaut (Blue Leve)
English Champion 2012
European Champion 2013

Nick Brooks (Black Leve)
IBJJF European Champion 2013
NAGA European Champion 2012

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BJJ NO-MAD – MIHAIL KUNCHEV

As Fight Club star Tyler Durden once said: "You're not your job!" I guess I'm not.

For the past twelve years I've been a successful producer for the biggest reality shows in my country – Bulgaria. Then I decided to quit my job for a whole year and travel around the world, searching for the untold stories of the everyday fighters and filming them as a legacy. This is my gift to the gentle art, which has changed my perspective on life so much; very hard for a producer, especially when you're at your peak and close to becoming an 'important person'. Let's just say that nowadays I wear my gi more than a suit.

My guide on this adventure is the original BJJ nomad himself, Dimitrios Tsitos. Dimitrios is a lifeguard, ex-professional swimmer and a black belt, who spent the last 10 years travelling around the world teaching, competing and visiting more than 60 countries. He's never stayed more than six months in one place.

We crossed the Balkans and UAE, meeting and filming incredible life stories. We met a whole host of people: from the biggest believer in the UFC who experienced God's miracles, a Wall Street "golden boy" who decided to give up everything and become a life coach on an exotic island, a Bellator fighter who came back from the dead and won three straight fights in the cage, to a BJJ professor in an Islamic state who believes his religion is the Arte Suave.

For one whole year our home was the dojos of our friends around the world and the ground under the stars. They say 'nomad' means you have no home, but what I found was that 'nomad' means you're home everywhere - you meet new friends.

We'll be more than happy for you to become a part of our journey. The pilot episode is already online at BJJNOMAD.NET and the season starts from January 2015.

Oss! - Mihail

#JJGF #NEWRULES #NOSTALLING #RICKSONROCKS

JIU JITSU GLOBAL FEDERATION MOVES INTO PHASE TWO

Since launching in July with Rickson's media blitz (which continues in this issue of JJS), the JJGF has announced it is moving into 'phase two'. The main part of that is a focus on education, following the federation's aim to promote the teaching of self defence (or at least, Rickson's conception of self defence). There was a CITP (Certified Instructor Training Path) gathering at the start of October, which was invite-only. A number of famous faces were present, such as Royler Gracie, Pedro Sauer and Henry Akins.

It will be interesting to see what happens once the certification is opened up more generally. The JJGF built a lot of momentum over July and August, mainly due to the numerous high profile interviews with Rickson. Things have slowed down more recently, but when Rickson is your figurehead, it is not hard to recapture the attention of the BJJ community.

HAPPY 4TH ANNIVERSARY !

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Caston Nathaniel received his brown belt from Professor Vinicius Draculino at Gracie Barra in Webster, Texas.

BJJ Lifestyle Team promotions: Luke Hennessy and John Watson receiving their blue belts from Diccon Lynes. Team Coach, Lyubo Kumbarov, and Donovan Eckley, BJJ Lifestyle Team's first blue belt, also pictured.

Jimmy Johnstone was promoted to black belt by Fernando Terere. Micah Atkinson also pictured.

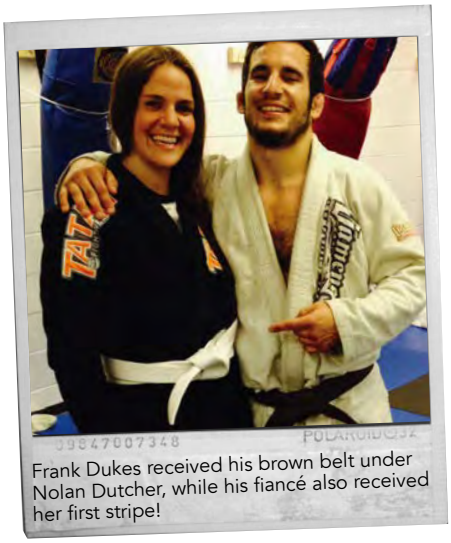
Johnny Clausen was promoted to blue belt by Felipe Mota and John Olav Einemo.

Mark Tyrrell receiving his blue belt from Chico Mendes at the Checkmat interclub, London, with none other than Léo Vieira and Marcus "Buchecha" Almeida taking the seminar!

Randy Kirby and Kenny Gober promoted to purple belt under Warren Grace of Guardian MMA in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Mark Nichols was promoted to blue belt by Christopher J. Kelly.

Michael Kelly received his blue belt from Aaron Naisbett at a Checkmat seminar.



Frank Dukes received his brown belt under Nolan Dutcher, while his fiancé also received her first stripe!

Mike Bidwell was promoted to black belt by Phil Migliarese and Ken Kronenberg from Team Tai-Kai/Balance after 18 years of training!

Michael Cowling and David Davies were promoted to purple belt by 3rd degree black belt, Marc Walder, and 1st degree black belt Shane Smith at Mauricio Gomes Origin BJJ.

Paul Severn was promoted to brown belt by Chico Mendes in the presence of Leo Vieira at Trojan Freefighters.

Recent black belt promotion for David Tobin and Simon Riley, given by Lee Catling at Gracie Barra Essex.

Purple belt promotions at Kojaks Sukata: Craig Noone, Kevin Fabia and Dean Naylor.

Victoria Maciel received her purple belt from her Professor and husband, Marcus Antelante, head instructor at Soul Fighters San Antonio.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR
EUROPE IS GOING PRO

There's no doubting the huge impact Metamoris has had on the jiu jitsu community. The event has injected life into the submission only format as well as promoting grappling as a spectacle. Now (finally) there's been a breakthrough in Europe, with the conception of the Polaris Professional Jiu Jitsu Invitational.

Though boasting one of the most loyal and dedicated demographics of practitioners you could hope for, jiu jitsu is still a long way from becoming a viable profession for wannabe athletes. Sure, the likes of Marcus 'Buchecha' Almeida or Leandro Lo are probably making a decent living, but the emphasis lies heavily on the word 'decent'. In a recent interview with Jiu Jitsu Style, Buchecha expressed his views on earning money though BJJ, stating that for him to 'bring home the bread' he has to be winning the big-paying tournaments – namely the WPJJC and ADCC.

When you consider that Buchecha is sitting on the top of the pile as jiu jitsu's premier grappler, it's easy to imagine how hard it must be for less decorated fighters to make a living purely though competing. In fact, it's close to impossible.

With Metamoris perhaps paving the way, I was delighted by the news that a brand new professional jiu jitsu event was set to debut in Europe, offering the invited fighters a pay cheque and us punters another great show to look forward to. If first impressions are anything to go by, Polaris is set to be a huge hit. Everything from the branding, venue, fight card and general online buzz suggest we have another fantastic professional event on the way that will not only promote BJJ, but supports the elite athletes as well. We will be in Wales on January 10th to cover all the action – fingers crossed it lives up to the hype!

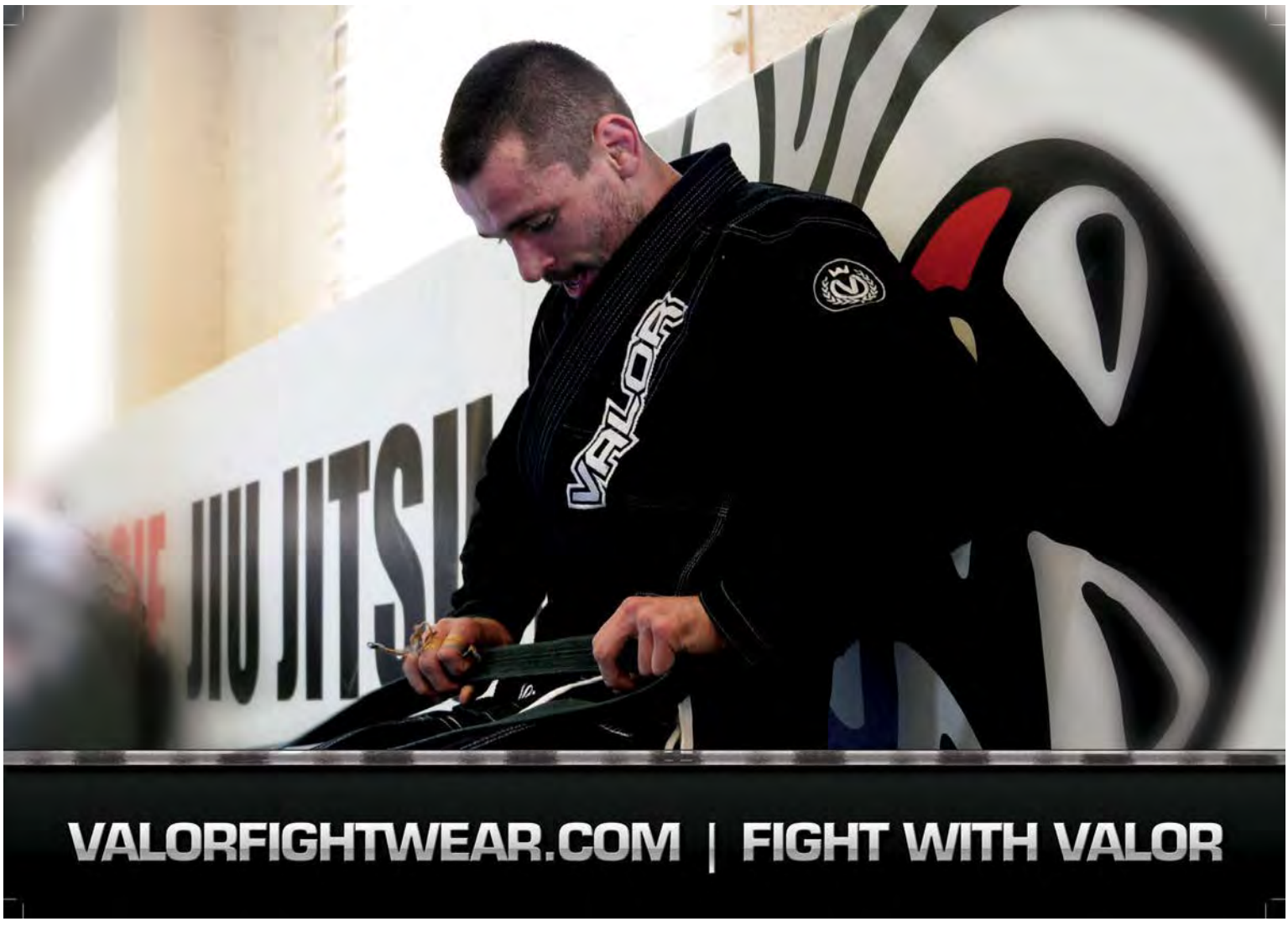
POLARIS
PROFESSIONAL JIU-JITSU INVITATIONAL

The excitement of attending the premier Polaris event got my gears turning, as I tried to picture the ideal jiu jitsu spectacle in my mind's eye. For me, I like the idea of submission only rules, 15-minute time limits and some sort of yellow and red card penalty system (similar to that of the old Pride FC rules) for inactivity. In terms of the venue, I'd want tiered seating, decent music, UFC-style promo videos in between bouts and a solid fight card. Oh yeah, and beer. Cold beer. But hey, that's just me. I challenge you all to envisage your ideal jiu jitsu spectacle.

Thanks for picking up our latest issue and keep training!

Callum

CALLUM MEDCRAFT



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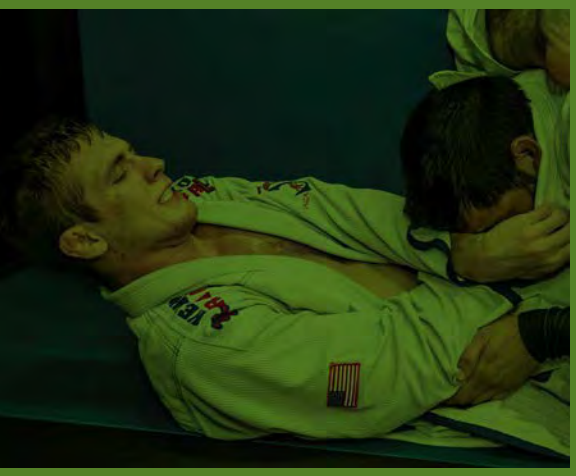
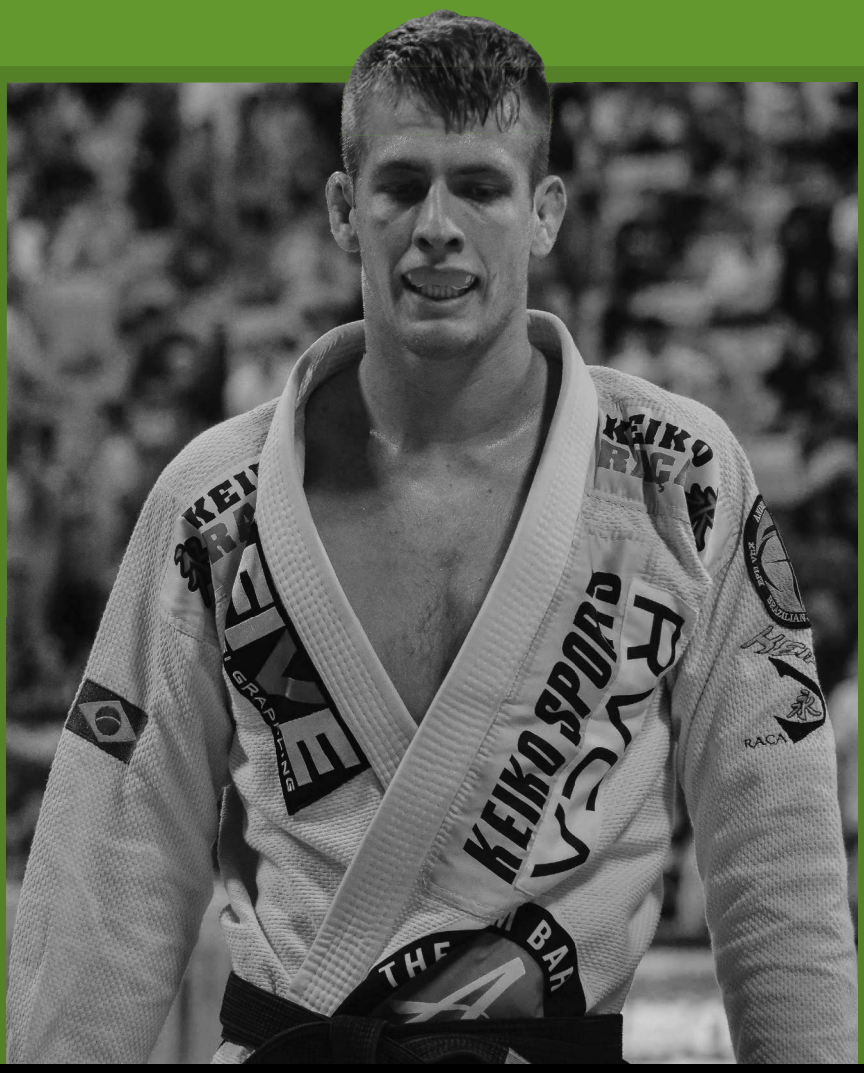
IT'S SCIENCE:

KEENAN CORNELIUS

BY TYLER BISHOP

KEENAN CORNELIUS IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE USA'S LEADING BLACK BELT COMPETITOR ON THE CIRCUIT AT THE MOMENT. HAVING EXCELLED ON THE IBJJF, ADCC AND METAMORIS PRO STAGE, KEENAN IS NOW KNOWN FOR HIS INNOVATIVE OPEN GUARD GAME, SPECIFICALLY THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS LAPEL GUARD SYSTEM.





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'It's Science' is brought to you by BishopBjj.com. The goal of BishopBjj.com is to expand and empower the jiu jitsu community by emphasising the science and art of jiu jitsu in fun and exciting ways. We want to highlight what makes jiu jitsu so calculated, but also what makes it so much fun.

66%

OF KEENAN'S SUBMISSIONS WERE CHOKES FROM THE BACK

KEENAN PULLED GUARD IN 10 OUT OF HIS 15 MATCHES

55%

OF KEENAN'S WINS ENDED VIA A SUBMISSION

73%

OF KEENAN'S MATCHES ENDED IN VICTORY

KEENAN SCORED FIRST IN 9 OF THE 15 MATCHES OBSERVED

40%

OF KEENAN'S PASSES WERE OF THE LEG DRAG VARIETY

ABSTRACT:

All matches observed of Keenan Cornelius, used in this small sample, occurred at IBJJF events, inside his weight division, and in the years 2013-2014. Only techniques, occurrences, and outcomes that were recorded are displayed in the data below (i.e. if no butterfly sweeps occurred there will not be a representation of that in the sample data charts. Matches were selected at random based on freely available matches. This is a limited sample but- given the estimated amount of matches in this time period – it is well above the percentage necessary to create a scientifically validated trend sampling.

NUMBER OF MATCHES OBSERVED	15
TOTAL MINUTES OBSERVED	118
MATCHES WON BY SUBMISSION	06
MATCHES WON BY POINTS	05
OPPONENT WON MATCH	04
TOTAL MATCHES DRAWN	00
TOTAL MATCHES WON	11

THE BREAKDOWN

There may not be a more powerful figure to enter the BJJ competition scene in the last 10 years than Keenan Cornelius. Cornelius gained significant attention several years ago when he achieved the self-titled – now famed – accomplishment of weight class and absolute "grand slam"; a series of tournament wins in the largest events of the year. Since this accomplishment, Keenan's stock has been on the rise.

With that in mind, Keenan's time at black belt has been both short and dense. Cornelius has missed very few major IBJJF events, giving us a phenomenal sample to study. Contrary to just about every one of our previous study subjects, he has a very diverse portfolio of techniques that he utilises in competition. We generally see the most successful competitors use a very short list of techniques, however Cornelius has been able to muster a winning percentage of 73% using a much more complex strategy.

In addition to a strong winning percentage, we see a positive submission percentage in our data as well. Keenan finished his opponents in approximately 55% of his matches, and his average match length was 7 minutes and 48 seconds – both statistics that match-up almost identically with the data we have on Rodolfo Vieira and Guilherme Mendes. What's most interesting about all this is the different way in which Cornelius achieved these results.

With competitors like Vieira and Mendes we see a very strict reliance on a set game plan – something that our data has suggested is a defining point of successful competition jiu jitsu. However, Cornelius' game possesses quite a bit more freedom than the aforementioned competitors. That's not to say Cornelius does not have a "game" that he uses, it just simply suggests that his may have another level of complexity or flexibility than those of his counterparts.

Keenan has recently made the lapel-guard (and the variant worm guard) techniques famous/infamous. If there is one common consistency, it's that we see this technique ever present in his game. He uses it primarily to sweep, and we saw it utilised in 45% of his matches. Additionally, he was able to achieve an average sweep-per-match rate of 1.13 – one of the highest ever recorded in our studies. Cornelius coupled this with a strong guard-pass rate of 0.66 per match; a stat we see comparable to other elite competitors. Finally, if you were to pick one spot that he did the most damage from it would certainly be the back. He was excellent at achieving the position and finishing. In 4 of the 5 matches in which he achieved taking his opponent's back he finished with a submission. In the one match he was unable to finish, he won by a considerable margin.

Keenan Cornelius' macro-stats are of an elite variety (comparable to the World Champions we've studied). The one data-point Cornelius is currently missing is the title of black belt World Champion. However, the passing of time and Keenan's growing track record would lead us to believe that his stock is certainly trending towards that illustrious title. It will be interesting to see if , as he refines his game, he chooses to maintain such a flexible strategy – as we've seen in the study – or if he will conform to the more conventional data-line we've seen thus far. One thing is for sure, Keenan Cornelius isn't going anywhere, and he may only be scratching the surface of what his career could look like in the future.

SWEEP (POSITION)

DE LA RIVA	4
SPIDER SWEEPS	3
50/50	1
LAPEL GUARD	7
SIT-UP GUARD	2

SWEEP (TYPE)

ANKLE PICK SWEEP	2
TOMANAGI	2
SCISSOR	3
TRIPS/OFF BALANCE	1
SIT-UP AND OVERTAKE OPPONENT	4
BERIMBOLO	3
COLLAR DRAG/ARM DRAG	1

PASS (POSITION)

ON KNEES	1
HALF-GUARD	2
STANDING	5

PASS (TYPE)

LEG DRAG	4
KNEE OVER	1
KNEE THROUGH	1
LEG WEAVE PASS	1
UNDER THE LEGS	1

TAKING THE BACK

SIDE CONTROL	2
GUARD	2
TURTLE	1

SUBMISSION (POSITION)

BACK	4
CLOSED GUARD	1
SPIDER	1

SUBMISSION (TYPE)

CHOKE FROM BACK	4
ARMBAR	2
CROSS COLLAR TOP	0
LOOP CHOKE	0

START OF MATCH

GUARD PULL	10
TAKEDOWN	1
PULLED ON BY OPPONENT	4

HISTORY 101
TEAM ATOS

When the Alliance team had a major split back in 2002, the repercussions would be felt for many years. Perhaps the most important result has been the creation of numerous new teams, a number of which continue to be a dominant force on the international competition scene today.

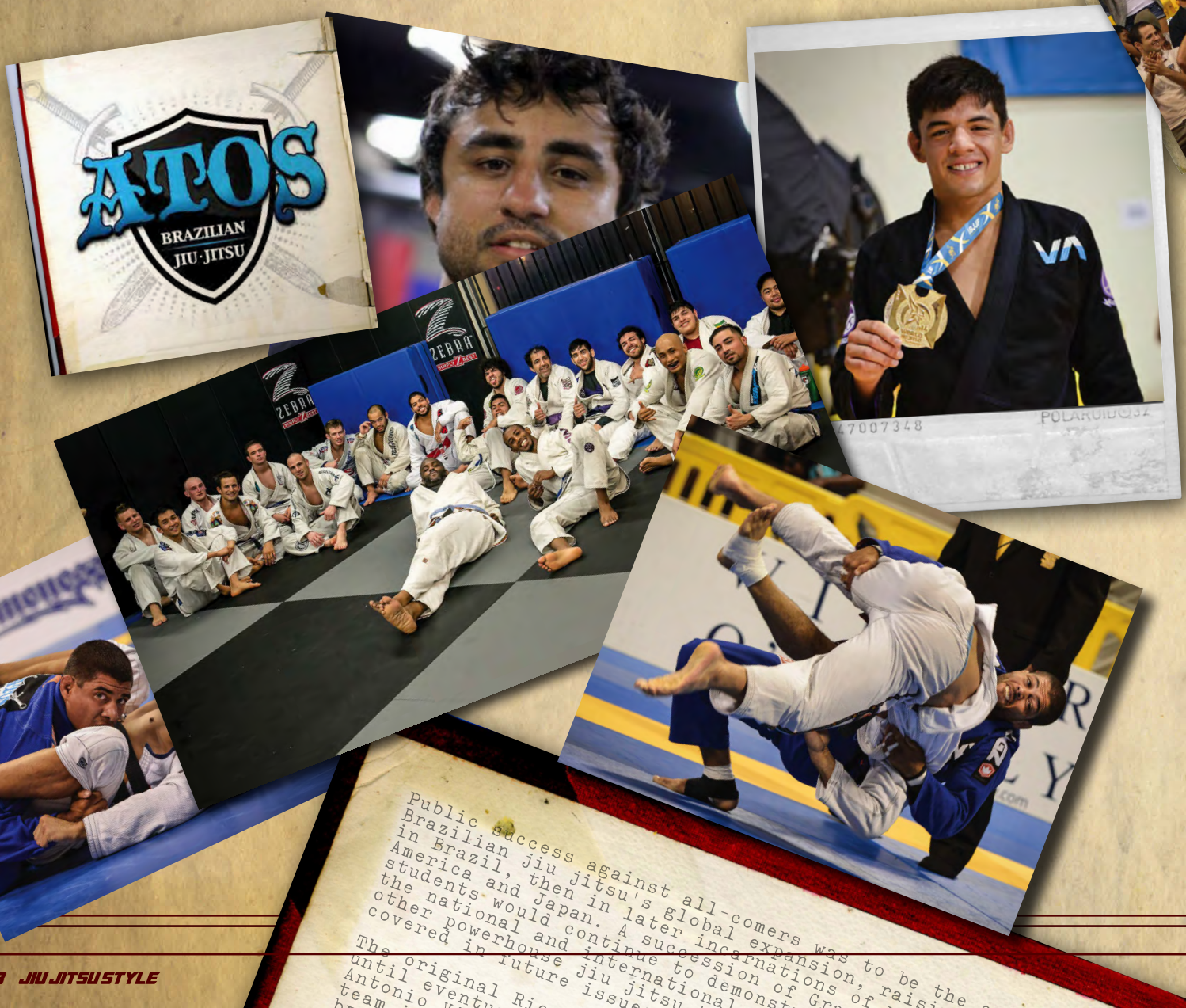
Andre Galvao is a well-known competitor, first rising to prominence during his time at one of those Alliance splinter-teams. TT was formed by Alliance alumni Fernando Terere and Eduardo Telles, who included many future champions amongst their students. Galvao often gives credit to Terere, such as in his interview with the Fighworks Podcast in 2009. Upon being asked who was the best person he had ever rolled with, Galvao immediately responded "The best? Man, for me, it's Terere."

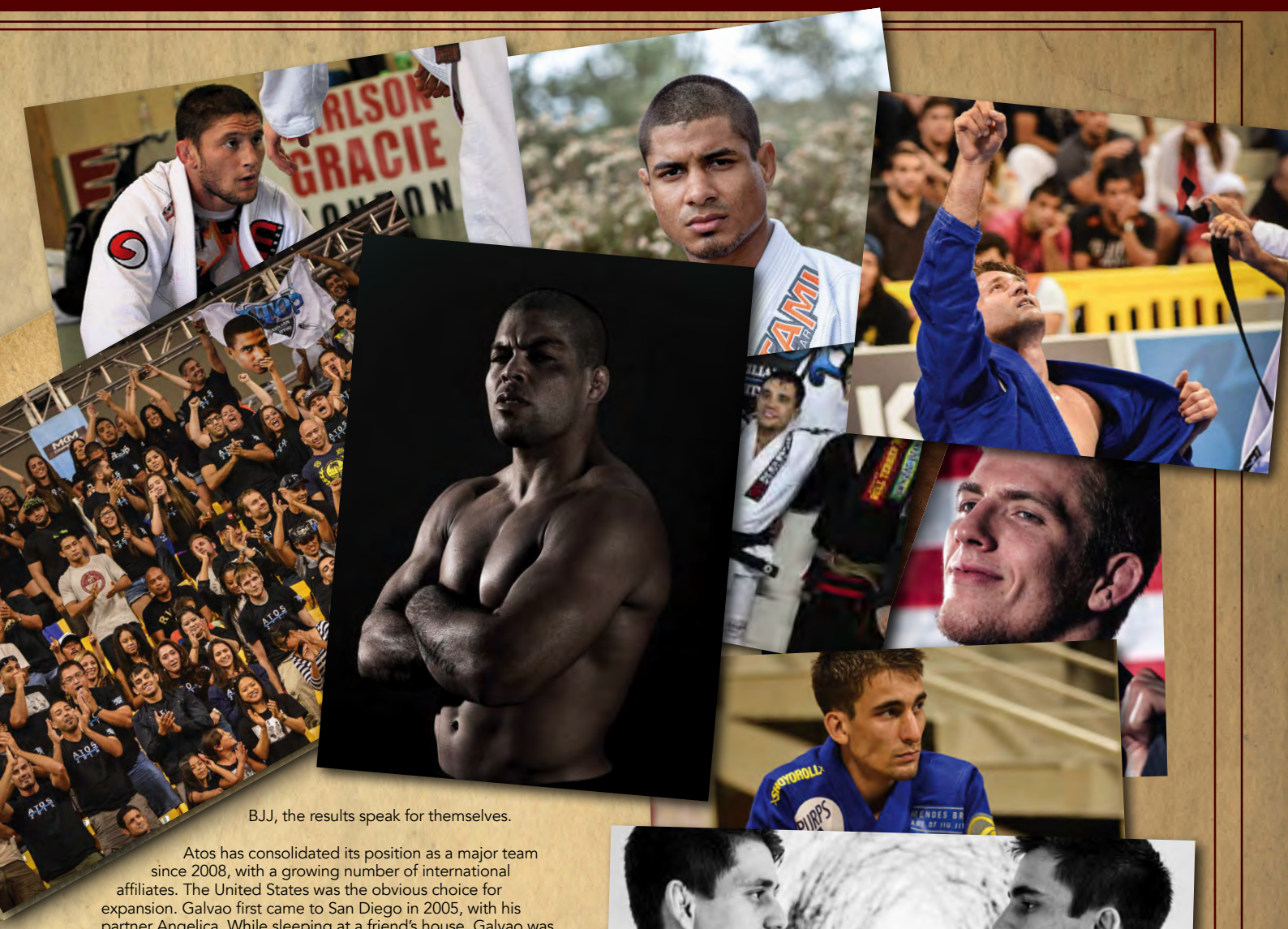
It was at TT that Galvao met Ramon Lemos, who had previously run a Nova Uniao affiliate in Sao Paulo. Unfortunately, in 2004 Terere underwent some personal issues that meant he had to step away from teaching. Galvao and Lemos therefore set out to find a new place to train, settling on Brasa (see JJS #015), yet another team that emerged from the Alliance split. While there, Galvao continued his impressive tournament record by earning a silver at middleweight in 2007, followed by a gold in 2008 as well as an absolute division bronze.

Gustavo 'Guto' Campos was also doing well that year. Proudly flying the Rickson banner, he won a gold medal at the Pan American Championships in his middleweight black belt division. Campos had earned his black belt four years earlier, then moved to California in 2007 to train with the legend, building a close friendship with Rickson's son Kron. After opting to return to Brazil and start an academy, Campos could not muster the rent for a space. Mrs Campos came to the rescue, meaning that Guto's first school operated from the humble surroundings of his mother's living room.

By October 2008, Campos needed somewhere better suited to jiu jitsu than the family home. His old friend Ramon Lemos had decided that the time was right to set up his own team, getting both Campos and Andre Galvao on board. All three had strong Christian beliefs and therefore looked to the Bible for inspiration, specifically the Book of Acts. For their new organisation's name, they therefore picked 'Atos', the Portuguese for 'Acts'.

Immediately upon its creation, Atos was in contention for multiple medals. Two students of Lemos, who had trained with him since they were children, would become the team's first black belts. They would also net Atos its first Mundials black belt title. The two students happened to be brothers: Rafael and Guilherme Mendes. Both have become tough to beat in their respective divisions, helping to popularise positions like the 50/50 guard and in particular the berimbolo. Though often criticised by more traditional elements within





BJJ, the results speak for themselves.

Atos has consolidated its position as a major team since 2008, with a growing number of international affiliates. The United States was the obvious choice for expansion. Galvao first came to San Diego in 2005, with his partner Angelica. While sleeping at a friend's house, Galvao was woken up to find himself in the middle of a fire. He lost all his clothes, but in what must now seem like divine intervention to the devout Christian, he found his takings from a recent seminar in Utah and his passport unburnt inside a Bible.

Fortunately, the visit in 2010 went rather better. Leaving Lemos in charge of the Atos Rio Claro academy back in Brazil, Galvao made another trip to San Diego. Despite the considerable competition since its founding that year, Atos San Diego has flourished. In 2013 it benefitted from an influx of American talent, in particular JT Torres and Keenan Cornelius. They are perhaps the two best prospects for the long-awaited second male American black belt adult gold medal at the Mundials. At the time of writing, that title remains unique to Rafael Lovato Jr.

American women have also risen to the top of the black belt podium, such as Lana Stefanac. At Atos, Chelsea Bainbridge-Donner is in the running to emulate Stefanac's achievement, having so far had considerable success at lower belt levels. Bainbridge-Donner received her black belt this year, after winning her brown belt Mundials division. She originally began training at 11 years old, drifting away from the sport after going to college at 17. When she graduated and moved to Hong Kong, she reconnected with jiu jitsu, later flying home to the States.

Bainbridge-Donner is certainly not the only high level female prospect at Atos. MMA fighter Cris 'Cyborg' competes in jiu jitsu for Atos: she smashed her way to the purple belt Mundials title in 2012. She did the same thing at the previous Mundials, defeating Amanda Lucas (the daughter of Stars Wars creator George Lucas) in the final.

Galvao's wife Angelica is another leading figure at the Atos women's team. She began training with Andre as a blue belt, but when her daughter was born she had a long lay-off from 2005 to 2010. Angelica regrouped impressively in 2011, winning her purple belt division at the Mundials after only restarting her training the previous November. This year, she has once again secured a Mundials title, this time at brown belt. Like her team mate Bainbridge-Donner, Angelica Galvao was also promoted to black belt on the podium.

Having spent the last few years with Galvao, a job opportunity has since brought Bainbridge-Donner to Costa Mesa, where she trains with the Mendes Brothers. Rafa and Gui Mendes have at this stage become a recognisable brand separate to Atos, though they continue to represent the team. Their Art of Jiu Jitsu academy, controversially opened directly across from another school, has rapidly become one of the most famous BJJ schools in the United States. With that strong foundation, there is surely more success in store for Atos.

SOURCES: FIGHTWORKSPODCAST.COM • BLOODYELBOW.COM • BJJHEROES.COM • INSIDEBJJ.COM • IBJJF.ORG
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JACK MAGEE

FIGHTER, TRAVELLER & BEARD CONNOISSEUR

LIVING IN A GYM AT 17, LUCIO 'LAGARTO' RODRIGUES BLACK BELT AND FORMER MIXED MARTIAL ARTIST, JACK 'XUXA' MAGEE, HAS AN EXTENSIVE HISTORY IN JIU JITSU. AS AN 18 YEAR OLD HE FOUND HIMSELF IN BRAZIL AND LIVING THE JIU JITSU LIFESTYLE BEFORE IT WAS EVEN TALKED ABOUT. NOW 29, JACK REFLECTS ON HIS EXPERIENCES, HOW THEY CHANGED HIM AS A MAN AND HOW TO ACHIEVE HIS WAY OF LIFE.

Jack Magee; black belt, mixed martial artist, teacher, trainer, traveller, coffee connoisseur, beardy grappler, mad hatter, charity man – have we missed anything?

[Laughs] I think that's about it really!

Well, what makes Jack Magee, Jack Magee?

I don't like to do anything too serious really; you've got to always find the positive in everything you do and help out when you can, because I've been helped out a lot too. I've always had people helping me so it has always kind of pushed me to help others.

Is that something you've picked up from your extensive history in training? I mean, you've met a lot of people in a lot of places so are the experiences you've had responsible for the way you bring yourself across today?

Definitely. When I was about seventeen I left the home I lived in with my family to live in a gym in Brighton for training; everyone helped me. After a while I left and moved to Brazil with like, no money, nothing. I've never had money anyway so I've never been scared of being absolutely broke, so when I see people with the same thing, I'll always try and help them out really.

I was going to say, you've been in jiu jitsu since you were a very young man. How did you find yourself in this life you're living today?

It was probably down to my older brothers, we used to wrestle in the garden and fight each other. Both were physically stronger than me and they were beasting me all the time. I said, "I'm not doing jiu jitsu, look at it, I'm not doing that." – I had never been into martial arts, I'd done a bit of boxing, but I knew I didn't want to do that. Anyway, my brother offered to pay

for my first month, so he did. I'd been in trouble, I'd been a bit naughty and they said, 'Come to Brazil, it'll change your life!' I had a little bit of money but I said no, but they insisted that I spend it on a ticket to Brazil, so I did.

After that, I came back thinking I don't want to get in trouble anymore. I just wanted to be focussed – there are too many beautiful things in the world to risk it all for.

You first met Lucio 'Lagarto' Rodrigues when you were eighteen and in Brazil - you're talking now as one of his black belts. Looking back, did you know the impact he would have on you?

Not really. When I was there he would be on the mat. I trained with the Vale Tudo team, but he'd always be the guy who would be telling me to try this jiu jitsu thing. All the MMA guys would tell him 'that won't work', until Lagarto did it and it would work. One day, when I was really young, he gave me a little bit of advice which has always stuck with me. I would try flash moves all the time but he would tell me that I needed to keep my jiu jitsu basic. To this day, that helps me in my teaching; I teach basic jiu jitsu and try to give people a strong base, the funky stuff can come later.

I think he's helped me an awful lot, especially when I first met him - he's influenced my game a lot.

You base your teaching on those solid fundamentals. With that approach, as well as your approach to life, what are the benefits?

I think everything is balanced and needs to be. You will be mega happy one week and the next, well, you might not, and it's the same with your jiu jitsu. You have to strike a balance between the five basic positions and anything between… a berimbolo or a DLR sweep, you'll still end up in a basic position afterwards, whether it's a mount or back mount.

If you have a weak mount, then there's no point mastering a funky move to get there so I always try and keep everything solid and balanced. I think Dennis Asche helped me with that a lot in Brazil.

To the regular guys who enjoy training but have never taken that travelling leap, haven't hit the road with their gear in a bag over their shoulder, got out of that comfort zone, trained in a place they've never been and rolled with guys they've never met before; can you talk us through the benefits?

I was both lucky and unlucky – I've never been comfortable anywhere I've been. I never had money and I never got to train as much as I wanted so I always felt I needed to get out. My dad travelled a lot when he was younger and encouraged us to as well.

Once you start travelling, you will meet people and learn that things aren't as costly as we are used to. You can do it; I turned up in Brazil with no money, nothing, and I got set up. I had a place to stay, I taught kids, I would go down to the beach and the guy would let me have a free deck chair because I taught his kid. So, within no time you can fit into a community, wherever you go in the world.

Do you think it can mould you as a person?

Yes. Definitely.

The only proper job I've done was sales and I'd never done sales. I found that because of travelling, I didn't place too much emphasis on anything other than jiu jitsu. I was so relaxed because of my experiences that I did really, really well in that job. If you can apply yourself to something, you can apply yourself to anything. You see how hard jiu-jitsu is, look at your first class and it's a long road to walk. You can go and learn languages, you can learn about cultures, it becomes very easy to do.

Let's talk about this 'jiu jitsu lifestyle' then – What is that to you, as someone who's perceived to live it?

My first taste was with the guys from On the Mat, Scotty and Dennis, back in Brazil. You'd see them, they'd literally be coming back from the beach, exhausting themselves on the mat, they'd go out after and eat, watch some MMA. I just looked at it and thought 'that's the life'. You know, with any sport that you completely engage yourself with, that's perfect, that's the lifestyle.

In jiu jitsu, you're always around other people that do jiu jitsu. They're people who will always want the best for you, they'll always be willing to train with you, you're always going to be happy living that way.

Where and who made you realise you were in the right place?

Probably in a brothel in Thailand [laughs] - no, I'm kidding, it was in Gordo's gym in Rio, I think. I'd been training for competitions with the likes of Dennis, on top of the normal sessions. Gordo would push me to the point that I would collapse, I'd be falling asleep in class. It was hot, there'd be loads of people on the mat and he would say 'When new people come to this house, you have to be the one to beat them, to push them' and I remember one Saturday, every Saturday, there would be twenty, thirty black belts, big names from other clubs. There would be cake and they would bring their kids.

It would be so busy that not everyone could roll, everyone would sit around and watch the few people who had space to roll. I've got tingles now just thinking about it. I sat and thought about whether I could get this in the UK. I wanted to show people that it's not just about turning up to train, paying your subs, having a roll, trying to beat people and then going home. It's about waking up and living it, having a roll in the morning like someone would do yoga, or watch the TV. It's about being together, almost like a pub atmosphere. We'd have a pub, they'd have mats, you'd look around and people would be playing with their kids doing jiu jitsu.

Not everyone can achieve that, but do you recommend that if someone is given half the chance they at least experience it, even if it's for a week or two?

Even before that, what I would recommend to somebody who wants to live the jiu jitsu lifestyle, anyone who wants to go and do the Brazil thing but believes they can't because of work commitments, is this. Unless it's your company, unless that's your dream, you do not owe anything to any company, any work, it's not something you have to do. We make our own commitments – if you drive a nice car, you have to pay for that car, it was your choice. So when you look at that car, that's the reason you aren't doing what you want to do.

I got rid of everything and went, so I would highly suggest looking at your lifestyle first and then going and experiencing the lifestyle that you read about because when you come back, it'll change everything. Go out there fit too; if you want to get fit, do it before you go so you can make the most of the days you have there. If you can go, even for two weeks, you won't want to come back. I'd advise it, or even America, but in Brazil it's more the lifestyle than training.

Jealousy!

Look, my bedroom is a mattress on the floor and a wardrobe around me, it's simple. If you find something and you think about how much you like it, then do it more! If something pisses you off, then don't do it. If you don't like your partner, break up. If you hate your job, quit. You owe it to yourself, you can't get those seconds back, waking up on a Monday and hating it, arguing with your girlfriend or having friends around you that are bad for you. You'll never, ever get that back, so make yourself happy.

People may look at the idea of the lifestyle and believe it's fabricated, unrealistic and unattainable, but it is attainable if you choose to make it, is that right?

It's that bug isn't it. People who don't understand, don't. They think we're weird and think that doing it all the time is strange but it's not. We're animals, we should be in packs, we're supposed to hunt together, do things together. Look at the people who don't do things, it can lead to eventual depression.

If you haven't found that buzz in your life then I can't help but feel sorry for you. I remember being in Germany once when I lived there, there was me and a guy stood looking at a millionaire. He had money, he was fat and he was balding. We questioned, is he the millionaire or are we the millionaires? I'd say it's us. Every day you wake up happy, with good people around you, doing good things, you're healthy, you know – you can't buy that and I think that is what frustrates people about jiu jitsu. You can't buy the belts no matter how much money you have in your pocket, you'll never buy the happiness that comes with it. That true happiness, the happiness you get when you first tap somebody out, the feeling you get when the sweep you've been working on actually pulls off or even winning that medal you trained for, no matter what medal; if you put the hard training in then you will be passionate about it. That's the true riches man.

I've been reading *The Alchemist* which is about turning metal into gold, and I've been thinking, if you can take nothing and turn it into something, if you can make something valuable, that's what the real alchemist is. A medal is just a piece of metal, but it represents all the work you put into it. If you were told that at the top of a mountain is the most amazing thing and you climbed, you struggled, you were cold, you were hungry and all there was at the top was just a pebble, you'd look at that pebble every day knowing that it's worth nothing, but worth a lot to you. That's how I feel about life and about jiu jitsu.

I suppose it is alchemy. You're going to be turning sweat, blood and tears into memories, a coloured belt and some shiny metal.

Cauliflower ears, broken fingers, yeah! How weird are we to sit there looking at a haematoma on our ears, calcium deposits on our fingers, popped knees and feeling proud. Nobody else does that! No one in any other sport will look at an injury and be like 'Yeah, look at that!' – We're crazy!

It's not a bad thing you know. Look at somebody with a cauliflower ear, if they're happy with that and they're confident then people can't really hate on them for that. It's a sign of your own commitment to something you love doing and do every day. I'd rather have that than stress, diabetes or a stomach ulcer. The guy who takes the mick out of a cauliflower ear is going bald, he's got a belly, he wears glasses because he sits at his computer all the time; I'd rather take the ear.

Jack would like to thank his sponsors: Connection Rio, Gawakoto, IPR Capital, Asura Wear and Planet BJJ. He would also like to extend thanks to Lucio 'Lagarto' Rodrigues, Dennis Asche and Roberto 'Gordo' Correa, as well as all his team at Mad Hatters.

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WORDS & PICTURES: CALLUM MEDCRAFT

LION CUBS

Taylor Pearman, River Blue Dillon and Sam Gibson embody a new breed of talented young fighters currently emerging in the UK. Representing the Carlson Gracie Team, and with a wealth of British, European and World championship medals under their belts, you'd best take note of their names. You're going to hear of them again.

As jiu jitsu continues to grow, more and more people are attempting to make the switch from hobbyist to professional. We caught up with the Carlson Gracie lion cubs to discuss their full-time lives in jiu jitsu and the events that have shaped their careers so far.

Hey guys, great to talk to you all. Can you please start by telling us your ages and how long you've all been training?

RIVER: I'm 19 and I've been training for four years now.

SAM: I'm 24 and I've been training for about ten years.

TAYLOR: I'm 17 and have been training for three years.

Can you talk us through your weekly training routines?

RIVER: It varies quite a bit from day to day, but I try and simulate the way we trained while I was in Brazil with Claudio Calasans. In fact, Claudio actually has a group on *whatsapp* and he sends us through the conditioning we need to do each day, so we do weights every day. It all comes through in Portuguese, so I have to translate it!

My dad will often give me a lift up to the academy for the 7am class, and then I'll do my conditioning after that and have a sleep on the mats. Midday there's yoga, more jiu jitsu and then another session at night. That's Monday to Friday and then I'm usually competing at the weekends.

SAM: I do the day class in London pretty much every day, followed by some conditioning. The evenings often involve me teaching somewhere, so it can vary from day to day. For example, today I'm in London for the lunchtime class, then I'll hang around and do some drills before heading out to teach. So I divide my day between teaching and training, as well as lifting weights.

TAYLOR: So my gym doesn't have any day classes, but the guys that are looking to compete will head in for lunchtime to do some drills, then we'll go and eat. I will generally turn up early for the evening class to drill beforehand; this happens Monday to Friday and then I also have a Saturday morning session too.

You all train jiu jitsu full time, so at what point did you discover that this is what you wanted to do with your lives?

TAYLOR: It didn't take me long at all to realise that I really enjoyed it and wanted to pursue it as much as I could. When I turned 16 that's when I really started to concentrate on BJJ and not worry about school anymore.

RIVER: At first it was my dad and my brother that were more into jiu jitsu through the UFC, so I didn't even really know what it was. My dad would tell me the stories about Royce Gracie and all that. After I decided that I wanted to train I found Carlson Gracie London on the internet and pestered my dad to take me to train. Since being introduced I've always loved training. The gym is actually quite far from where I live, so when I started I used to take my gi to school then have to get the tube to the academy. I'd get to the gym really early, at about 3:30pm, and then my dad would come and pick me up – Monday to Friday. People would make jokes about me, saying I should just put a tent up on the mat.

That was just normal for me, going to school and doing jiu jitsu, but it was my dad who asked me what I wanted to do when I finished school and suggested that if I enjoy jiu jitsu, I should pursue it and chase my dreams.

SAM: I was training from 14 to 18 maybe once or twice a week. Then, when I got to 18 I started to go out partying a lot. I remember I was training the day after going out with my friends and I felt really bad, so that was when I decided I needed to make a decision about what I wanted to do with my life. I could go down the route of partying all the time and probably working a job I don't like, or I could focus my efforts on something that I was passionate about and really enjoyed.

I remember that day very clearly, trying to train the day after I'd been drinking and just feeling terrible, but it did mean I ended up making a big decision to take on jiu jitsu full time.

You've been around the UK scene for 10 years Sam, so it must have changed a lot in that time?

SAM: It's changed a lot. I remember competing as a blue belt at Seni in 2010 and it was this tiny little tournament, but that was the biggest event we had. Now there are so many great competitions that are run as businesses, it's so much better.

All three of you are known for being fantastic competitors, so what would you say are your most memorable competition achievements?

TAYLOR: Probably winning the European Championships in Lisbon. The year before, I won the Nogi Europeans in London, but it was the first Nogi Europeans and it wasn't as big an event as the gi one in Lisbon. It was such a big event so winning that was crazy. I was 16 then.

RIVER: I used to really suffer with nerves. I would watch videos back and not recognise the guy fighting, it would just look like some other guy wearing my gi because I'd fight much harder in the gym. So for me, some of my favourite moments were at the Worlds. Lots of people can do well locally, but it's a whole different game when you get on to the world stage. To go there and get silver was a big achievement for me because it was all about getting over my fears and realising I could do well.

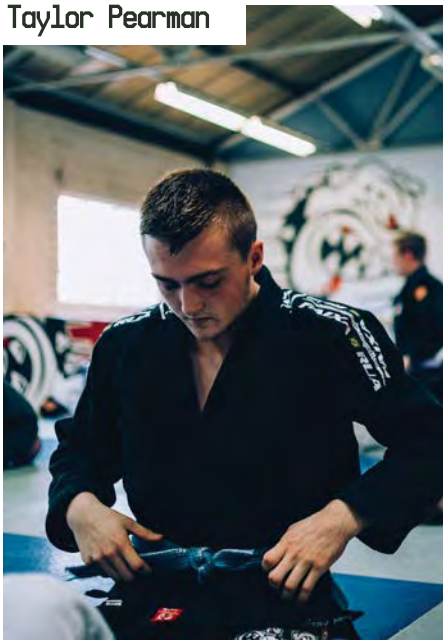
SAM: Actually, this year's Worlds has really driven me and motivated me. I went there last minute really, as I won a competition in Finland that then gave you a free trip to fight in LA. I gained lots of confidence from my first two fights, as I tapped two tough guys. That really made me realise I can do well at the top level. In my third fight I took the guy's back, I had the choke on and I saw his hand go up to tap, so mentally I thought I'd won, but he managed to escape and catch me. I guess it was quite a defining moment because I'd done so well, but because I thought I'd won in a fight and mentally switched off, I ended up losing. It shows you can be the best but you can never lose your concentration. I've learned that lesson and gained so much motivation. Even though I didn't win and I've won other stuff, that experience is my biggest motivation at the moment.

You all trained at Clark Gracie's in your preparation for the Worlds, so what would you say you got out of that experience and how does it differ from your training at home?

SAM: The style was a bit different really. Because it was Clark's gym, there were loads of guys with omoplata-orientated games. That was great for me actually, as that area of my game improved a lot, just because all the guys there were so good at it.

TAYLOR: Even though there are plenty of people

Taylor Pearman



like us here in the UK, most people who train do it recreationally. It was great being in San Diego as we were training with lots of like-minded people every day – there were loads of guys turning up and training every single day. Obviously Clark was great as well and he was training with us a lot. It really boosted my confidence being around people with similar goals and with such high levels of jiu jitsu.

RIVER: I think it's great heading out to training camps like that. For us, we have to travel and get acclimatised and everything before the Worlds, but most of the guys over there were a little bit more chilled out about it all because it was all so close by. Not saying it wasn't as big of a deal for them, just that it was a different experience for them. It really felt like we were living the jiu jitsu lifestyle out there: training, heading to the beach and eating acai.

SAM: We were all having such a good time, every day was a laugh.

RIVER: And Clark was really good with us; he was driving us around and hanging out with us. I felt like, obviously Clark aside, the level was pretty similar to our gym at home as well.

All three of you represent the Carlson Gracie Team, so what do you think makes your training environment special?

SAM: There's a real family atmosphere. It's kind of like a tribe in a way, and we all have our place and everyone gets on. I never argue with anyone at the gym. I can't remember the last time we argued. We've got great guys like Dickie (Martin) and Simon (Hayes) there pushing us every day to make us better, so I feel like we are part of a unit.

TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, I'm not always at the main academy in London, but whenever I come to train everyone makes me feel so welcome. You saw today, after training we all hang around and talk about stuff we've picked up or techniques that have been working well for us.

SAM: But when we fight, it's war. No one is messing around (laughs).

What are your individual long-term goals?

TAYLOR: The only goal in my head right now is to become a world champion. That's it. When I achieve that, I'll look past that.

SAM: My dream is to win the biggest tournaments, like the Pan Ams, Worlds and Europeans at brown belt. I also want to have a successful academy at my home in Croydon – Carlson Gracie Surrey. The same with all the other gyms I teach at, I just want to help jiu jitsu grow as much as possible.

RIVER: When you're young, it's hard to imagine yourself as a black belt at like 25 or something. In my head I've started out aiming small and winning local tournaments and trying to be the best blue belt, then best purple belt at the gym. I always want to do well for my team, so my goal was to be the youngest person to medal for my team at the Worlds, or the youngest person to get their purple belt. I want to be one of the youngest black belts in the UK and to represent the UK at world level. I'm just not going to stop.

So if you had to describe the strengths and weaknesses in your own games, what do you think would they be?

RIVER: I used to struggle with this actually. So, look at the Miyao brothers and you pretty much know what they are going to try to do, so I always feel like you need to play to your strengths and have a game plan. But, I don't really feel like I know what my main strengths are yet. I guess I just sort of go with the flow; half guard, spider guard, closed guard or whatever. I just like to have fun really; I do everything in the gym – all the funky jiu jitsu.

River Dillon

SAM: I used to only play guard, but at the moment I love passing. I think passing is sometimes a little easier for me, especially against bigger guys, because I can use my speed. I like all kinds of guard as well, whatever I get to, but my opponents will have to work out my weaknesses (laughs).

TAYLOR: I don't really want to say any of my weaknesses either (laughs). I just got my first takedown in a competition recently, so it's fair to say I usually pull guard. But people are now going to have to watch out for my takedowns!

Who's the biggest character in your gym?

RIVER: We've got loads. There's this guy called Jay 'The Animal' who's just a short, bald barrel of a guy, but you hang around him for half an hour and he'll have you laughing. If he gets angry he gets veins popping out of his head (laughs).

SAM: When I'm in the gym, I feel like I never stop laughing, there are so many great characters training with us.

So you boys have travelled and trained together an awful lot, now it's time to shed the dirt on each other!

TAYLOR: Sam is definitely the lazy one.

RIVER: Yeah, and Sam is always the one playing games. We'd finish a training session in Brazil and then out of nowhere Sam's dropping his wet boxers from the session on your back of something nasty like that. Or he'll never flush the toilet and stuff like that.

SAM: I don't think any of that is true (laughs).

Who would you say you admire most in jiu jitsu at the moment?

SAM: For me there are loads of people I like, people like Leandro Lo and Claudio Calasans, but I'd say Clark Gracie stands out. He's a really high level guy, but his philosophy and attitude towards life away from the gym are also things I really agree with.

TAYLOR: For me it's Leandro Lo. He came out of nowhere and is just smashing people now at middleweight. I don't think I've ever seen him stall once and he's always pushing the pace, that's how everyone should fight. It's impossible not to like his game.

RIVER: I go through stages where I like guard more, so watch people who play guard the most, or start watching Rodolfo if I'm into passing. Guys like Leandro Lo are awesome, plus I like the guys who aren't always on social media all the time, they are just thinking about their jiu jitsu and training hard. I don't really idolise people too much, because these are the people I one day want to be fighting. I respect them and believe them to be great role models.

Thanks for your time guys, are there any people you'd like to mention?

SAM: Man, to get sponsorship and help in jiu jitsu is really hard, so to have brands like Saviour Tea and Faixa Rua helping me is amazing. Faixa Rua has sent me all over the world to compete. Thanks also to my new sponsor Datsusara who are helping me, and all these people are supporting the sport so much.

TAYLOR: Thanks to Saviour Tea and Faixa Rua for all their support, as they both help me a lot. Also a big thanks to my coach Alain Pozo, as he doesn't charge me to train and has been a massive help in all that I do.

RIVER: My family are my biggest sponsors with all their support in what I do. I just signed a deal with Tatami Fightwear and it's amazing to be associated with them. They are a massive brand so it's a big deal for me to get the exposure they can give me. Also a big shout out to Saviour Tea.

Sam Gibson

INVINCIBLE

RICKSON GRACIE

"YOU TAKE ADVANTAGES OFF AND YOU PENALISE STALLING TO AUTOMATICALLY CREATE A MUCH MORE DYNAMIC FIGHT"

RICKSON GRACIE: SAVING JIU JITSU

In the world of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Rickson Gracie occupies rarified air. Few martial artists have managed to create an aura of invincibility in the manner Rickson did throughout his competitive career. The most famous of the Gracie family champions, he retired undefeated in MMA and sport jiu jitsu. Hyperbole aside, the man is a living legend. Rickson was kind enough to spend some time with Jiu Jitsu Style to discuss the beloved art his family created, the problems he sees with the road jiu jitsu is on, how his legacy lives on through his son and how he plans to save the art by bringing BJJ back to its roots.

ON SAVING JIU JITSU FROM ITSELF

There is no question that Brazilian jiu jitsu has soared in popularity since Rickson's brothers helped expose the world to the art through the UFC. As BJJ grew more popular, opportunities developed with increasing frequency for instructors to leave Brazil and establish themselves overseas. Tournaments got bigger, prizes became more lucrative and endorsement deals have gotten so generous, at the top level, that some athletes are now able to make a living just by competing and teaching BJJ. Making a living doing solely what you love in this sport requires dedication, commitment and sacrifice. World championship trophies, gold medals and first place banners are the easiest way to point at tangible results and market an academy's success.

Rickson believes this dynamic has led to the majority of jiu jitsu academies focusing on the sport aspect of the art and straying away from its original principles of self-defence. He noted, "Jiu jitsu started with a very small group of people; my father and my uncles established the reference to teach in the first Gracie school. Other masters like Romulo Barreto started representing and teaching jiu jitsu in the same way, always with the course of self-defence and then we started to practise the moves, got effective with the changes, and after that process we began competing."

In Rickson's time the athletes had less to gain than competitors of today. Back then they fought more for pride than money. Competitors now have a chance to make a living from jiu jitsu by adding one elite gold medal to their curriculum. Training for fights has also changed; with the advent of the Internet it has become much easier to scout and prepare for opponents and learn their tendencies. In Rickson's view this has contributed to the deviation of jiu jitsu from its self-defence roots. "The goal of the competition is always to prove which guy is the best guy out there, and today's rules and the progressive process sometimes makes you feel like, 'wow man, I was better than the guy, but he stalled, he held me and did nothing, ended up getting a little advantage and winning the fight.' Sometimes what happens today is that it's not the best guy who wins the fight, but the most strategic with the best understanding of the rules who ends up winning without being the best guy."

JIU JITSU VERSUS ANTI-JIU JITSU

In Rickson's mind the purpose of jiu jitsu is to move forward and seek the submission. He believes that the techniques being used should translate to MMA and street fighting in order for Brazilian jiu jitsu to retain its true essence. He has identified stalling tendencies, which he dubs '*anti jiu jitsu*,' as one of the main problems in today's BJJ because these types of positions inhibit submissions.

"The most important problem is stalling, we have to restore effectiveness. The problem is because as the evolutionary process in competition keeps going so people start to understand and start to practise anti-jiu jitsu moves to have control of the situation. They prefer to use stalling positions to have more control and have advantages and so on. By having, not a radical change in the rules, but adjusting and taking off the advantages – which is a grey area – it's very hard to judge the advantages. You take advantages off and you penalise stalling to automatically create a much more dynamic fight, escalating to the submission in a very realistic and very similar way than in a street fight or in the cage."

Rickson sees the trend towards stalling as a by-product of needing to succeed at the highest levels of competitions, enabled by the point rewarding systems of organisations with prestigious tournaments. When discussing stalling he noted, "Some moves they're very effective for medals, you know, they can make the fighter have better control of the position and have a better pace in the fight. Strategically they can make a much easier game to the medal, but this efficiency doesn't translate to effectiveness in real life. It's a little different with the traditional jiu jitsu way of training to be completely comfortable with self-defence and street or cage fights; it doesn't translate in modern jiu jitsu competitions where those moves completely change the strategy of the game, the dynamic aspect of the fight's capacity of escalating to the finish. Fighting becomes ugly and inefficient.

"The competition becomes more risky and much more unpredictable when both competitors go for it; trying to sweep, to pass the guard and go for the submission. That's much more risky, so in order for them to ensure a medal they start to come up with positions like the 50/50 guard. The purpose of 50/50 is not to submit, but to hold the position in order for you to eventually make a move, and capitalise on a sweep, go on top and get two points. You can see this strategy done with a move that doesn't represent a progression to the submission. Also, some grips from the guard when you get them and you entangle the feet and you're kind of waiting for the other guy to do something you feel like, 'wow man, I cannot move my arm, so what am I gonna do now?'

"Every movement which has no objective path towards submission I call a stalling move; these moves where you just regroup, talk to your coach, and waste the patience of your audience, just to make the podium. I don't know why, I mean the arguments are many, but these positions clearly show a lack of progressiveness. The guy is just there waiting and wasting time, trying to capitalise on an error and get the medal. I feel like this is completely outside of the real culture of jiu jitsu's progressiveness and ability to exchange movements. It's like they're stopping the chess game and holding on. I feel like that creates a situation where the fight becomes much more strategic than progressive. This leads to athletes training and competing completely

IS SAVING BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU

different than when he would fight in real life. If you put them in the cage or in a street fight they'll be completely lost because the comfort level experienced in stalling and holding through competition will be gone. You have to be dynamic and escape the punch, go for the throw, mount or take the back. You have to do something either to run away or eliminate the threat, but it has to be realistic. This kind of reality aspect is missing from the jiu jitsu that is focused on sport and competition."

RICKSON AND KRON

Rickson's pedigree and competitive accomplishments are unquestionable. In the world of alpha predators he was an apex killer who left an awe-inspiring trail of mangled limbs and choked opponents on his way to retirement without ever compromising the principles of his family's martial art. He fought proactively, not reactively because, he believes that's the best way to exploit the effectiveness of BJJ.

Rickson believes fighters in today's competition scene have strayed away from killer instincts and have opted for more of a survival-mode approach to fighting. Simply put, Rickson wants fighters to return to the art's roots and go for the finish, to put themselves out there by being aggressive without being reckless. He believes it is possible to succeed at the highest levels of competition without resorting to the stalling practices that have warped jiu jitsu's original purpose. Though he no longer competes, his legacy continues on the mats and he points to his own flesh and blood as evidence that it is not necessary to resort to stalling in jiu jitsu. "Only if the fighter has a progressive passion, a guy like my son Kron for example, he's still working with no 50/50, no berimbolo or nothing like that; he just goes for the kill and almost all the time he is able to submit the guy.

"I go to a seminar and I see like at least 80 percent of the guys there, sometimes they're tough guys, they know how to berimbolo and a lot of that stuff: I mean they're tough guys, but they don't have the fundamentals. Sometimes they feel like, 'wow man, I train for 15 years but you showed me something so basic today, but so profound, man it's very nice and very motivating to go back to train so that kind of motivation, that kind of idea of learning the profound aspect of jiu jitsu is very motivating for me to be able to pass on to people, I mean I love it."

Rickson's son Kron has benefited from the refined instruction of his father, which translates into effortless effectiveness for all his life. He is Rickson's proof that keeping jiu jitsu basic and forward moving can equate to success. Kron embodies all of the martial arts philosophies that Rickson believes in and is his representative on the mats and in MMA. Proud and protective of his son, he believes that comparisons between their careers are unfair because of the way the sport has evolved and the talent pool of competitors has broadened.

He noted, "The competition today is much harder, you know, the jiu jitsu today has changed a lot from the time I was competing, it's like a monster that has never stopped growing, developing different arms and different heads. I think Kron gets a lot from me, you know, I feel like he has his own personality, he has great techniques, he's been training for life under a good strategy and mentality so he becomes like myself tomorrow. I don't compare because it's hard to compare; in many ways he's a much nicer kid than me, much less life experienced than me, coming from Rio I fought a lot on the streets, I had a lot of malice in my mind. He's a California boy you know, different mindset, and different needs.

"We come from completely different mindsets, but his dedication is 200% and his commitment to represent the family and do his best and go to his limits is 200%. His focus and also his physicality and his training, the way he goes, he's not only thinking about being technical, he has to use all the weapons everybody does, so now he's gonna compete in MMA and he walks around at around 180 lbs, but he's gonna compete at 155 like everyone else does. There are a lot of modern aspects of the training and the weight divisions so he's trying to keep up with the evolution of competition, which makes much better athletes. At his age I didn't eat super foods, I just took my fruit and vitamins and did my push-ups and my pull-ups, but nothing at the level of what he does today. So I feel like he keeps up with the evolutionary process of MMA and BJJ and I'm very proud and confident he will not just represent, but get results he expects because he's not playing, he's focused."

Kron is the link to Rickson's past and future legacy. Rickson is very protective of his son's training. Eddie Bravo recently taught Rickson the rubber guard principles and offered to help train Kron in preparation for his MMA debut. Rickson was appreciative, but declined because he believes that 10th Planet principles like the half guard lockdown and rubber guard, though effective, are also conducive to stalling. "I feel like Eddie Bravo is a very solid jiu jitsu practitioner and he's coming with very solid ideas, you know, but the only thing is I think he's a little much putting himself in a defensive position. Like he finds a position to lock you up and he doesn't want to kill you, he wants to wait and as you attempt to escape you make a mistake and make a bigger mistake for him to capitalise on. Even though

"ONLY IF THE FIGHTER HAS A PROGRESSIVE PASSION, A GUY LIKE MY SON KRON FOR EXAMPLE, HE'S STILL WORKING WITH NO 50/50, NO BERIMBOLO OR NOTHING LIKE THAT; HE JUST GOES FOR THE KILL"

THE FUTURE OF RICKSON'S LEGACY

"I'VE BEEN DOING SEMINARS ALL OVER AND I FELT EVERY TIME I GO TO A SEMINAR A LOT OF THE BLACK BELTS SOMETIMES AREN'T AWARE OF SOME OF THE BASIC MOVEMENTS"

he is using the concept properly, the idea of holding on and waiting like he did with Royler in the Metamoris or like he does sometimes in the rubber guard, I disagree, because if the guy doesn't move the fight stops, you know, and I feel like that's not exactly the way I like to progress the fight and escalate. I have a lot of respect for the things he showed me and for his views, but it's just not me," said Gracie.

It can be argued that Kron is the exception rather than the rule when it comes to refusing to adopt stalling tactics because he has the genes and the lifelong training to circumvent their need. Rickson disagrees and wants to help restore jiu jitsu's effectiveness by offering a potential solution to what he views as the problem with modern jiu jitsu. He believes that by restoring the effectiveness of BJJ and making techniques translate into all aspects of combat, instead of only applicable to sport jiu jitsu, jiu jitsu will take the next step in its evolution. He plans to push it towards that direction through the Jiu Jitsu Global Federation (JJGF).

THE FUTURE OF RICKSON'S LEGACY

Rickson wants BJJ to return to its self-defence roots and JJGF is the platform he has designed to help him in his quest. He wants JJGF to be an umbrella organisation that unifies and regulates the quality and effectiveness of martial arts training. According to Rickson, "Our idea through the federation is providing service to restore effectiveness in our game and also provide a possibility, once we become unified, to create a world-wide ranking, not only from one tournament, but for many tournaments in a world-wide circuit. Then we can definitely bring to the community and bring to the sport to increase the possibility to bring major sponsors and TV to the sport. So everything can be grown if we unify with better, more progressive and dynamic rules, getting academies with better professionals teaching so we can really create a format where the sport will be much more dignified and positive to the whole jiu jitsu community."

Creating a vehicle to help evolve the sport grew organically, Rickson explained: "This idea came from my constant desire to teach. I've been doing seminars all over and I felt every time I go to a seminar a lot of the black belts sometimes aren't aware of some of the basic movements. I confirmed the need from a lot of black belts who come from a competition background to learn self-defence because the core of jiu jitsu is self-defence so combining that kind of motion also with the disappointment I've seen from a lot of the tournament fights these days which has a lot of…I mean I love to see good fights, but maybe 8 out of 10 are very boring. Positions are not happening, people don't go for submissions as they should. There is a lot of anti jiu jitsu moves with stalling that's kind of ugly. The competition aspect is very disappointing for me these days."

He plans to move jiu jitsu forward by creating a governing body that will legitimise and unify everyone under the JJGF umbrella, functioning as a regulatory body that supports all organisations, tournament federations and associations. He explained, "I like to acknowledge the service and the results of every existing tournament, every existing teacher and every existing school. I will suggest for promoters to install better rules to improve the sport, better the students and to create the possibility for bigger growth because the way that jiu jitsu is split today every association or federation has many events, but nobody is connected to each other. So how can we create a ranking similar to the models in professional surfing and tennis? How can we use different events like in tennis and surfing with major sponsors, with much more money involved for the athletes?

The answer is unified under one big umbrella, I'm not trying to take anyone from their place, I'm trying to help promote and support all the existing events, but with a more unified rule it will be better for the athlete, for the sport and for everybody's business. I feel like there is a lot of truth in what I say based on my heart and my feelings. I will always suggest new rules and suggest that the teachers learn self-defence and the most important thing for me in the educational aspect is I focus to educate 85% of the community today, which is still white belts and blue belts, who without knowing and without thinking are led to believe that they should learn jiu jitsu competition and not learn jiu jitsu self-defence, so they don't know what they need and what they should learn. By creating that kind of argument, to bring that testimony - my opinion and other masters' opinions - and try to create that kind of sense of questioning and research, I believe because people are not stupid, their own natural sense will lead them to a better and more reasonable option. I'm just suggesting things and trying to unify everybody under one umbrella."

Rickson sees TV and the Olympics as within jiu jitsu's grasp. He believes that the key towards taking that next step lies in better organisation and unification in order to standardise training and make jiu-jitsu return to its submission-seeking roots. He has created the JJGF to help take jiu jitsu to that next level. If he succeeds, his past accomplishments as a fighter will be dwarfed by the future of his legacy.

NINO SCHEMBRI

OPEN GUARD MASTER

Having somewhat lost their way on the competition scene in recent years, it's easy to forget what a powerhouse the Gracie Barra team has been in times past. Founded in 1986 by Carlos Gracie Jr, Crolin and Rilion Gracie, the Machado brothers and Leao Teixeira, the 1990s will forever be remembered as the golden era of Gracie Barra – and for good reason.

If you want to talk about innovators, the Barra mats were blessed with plenty, be it Roberto "Roleta" Magalhaes and his inverted guard, Mauricio "Tinguinha" Mariano's spider guard, Roberto "Gordo" Correa's half guard or Nino Schembri's omoplata and – dare we say it – rubber guard. Though all these men will go down as legends of our sport, Nino will always be remembered as one of the first, and best, adopters of open guard.

During a time when closed guard and takedowns still reigned supreme, Nino was throwing caution to the wind with his dynamic omoplatas, gogoplatas and generally unorthodox approach to attacking from his back. Nowadays, you are just as likely to see a blue belt perform the berimbolo as setting up an armlock from closed guard, but Nino was a trend setter. In the 90s, open guard was not only innovative, it was also somewhat of a dirty word amongst traditionalists. Back-to-back black belt world titles in 1997 and 1998 for Schembri started a shift in mentality within the community.

"It all started when I was a blue belt, but it wasn't something I was trying to achieve," explains Nino on when he started to develop his devastating open guard. "It's just because I was so flexible that it started happening – I wasn't there trying to do the rubber guard or omoplata. I was born flexible, so for me it became easy to do things from open guard that other people couldn't do. Like I say, there were a lot of tough guys at the gym back then, but I guess me and Roleta were known for being the flexible guard guys."

With so many champions fighting under one roof in Barra da Tijuca before the boom of emigration and Gracie Barra's eventual relocation to the US, you can see why Nino looks back on these times with fond memories. Though he won't name names, we're happy to oblige: Lucio "Lagarto" Rodrigues, Marcio Feitosa, Renzo, Ryan and Roger Gracie are just some the legends who cut their teeth on Barra mats over the years.

"It was an amazing time at Barra Gracie," says Nino with fond recollection. "I don't want to say names, because I am sure I will miss someone out, but there were so many amazing trainers and good friends there at that time. There were many great black belts, lots of brown belts and I really learned so much. It was such an amazing time.

"It's difficult to know if that sort of environment can ever be recreated. We had, I don't know, probably fifty black belts who were all tough guys. Thinking about it now, I think it will be hard to have this number of top fighters all in one place again."

The famed group of Barra champions were installed with a winner's mentality the moment they entered the academy; every week, every training session and every roll was a battle towards being crowned number one at the Mundials. With so many athletes gunning for glory, it has been said that the Gracie Barra in-house qualifying matches were often harder fought than the bouts at competition!

"It happened, yes it happened," says Nino on the famous Gracie Barra qualifying events. "I did this at Barra Gracie too. You would have to qualify before getting the chance to fight at a tournament. To be honest, I didn't like this too much, because it was hard for me to switch from training with a friend and then having to fight. It's difficult, but I also understand it needed to be done.

"That makes me think of what you see at the Worlds these days when two guys from the same team don't fight each other in a final. You have to fight. It's not easy to fight a friend but, come on, it's not MMA. I think it's not good for the sport when we miss finals because of two teammates who don't want to fight. They should have to fight. This is my opinion."

Though uber fans will know of Nino's prowess as a guardiero and world champion status only too well, it's his omoplata innovations that have grabbed the most headlines in recent times, thanks largely to the exploits of a certain Eddie Bravo.

Schembri's flexibility and creative mind led to a whole host of unique submissions and sweeps, including numerous sequences stemming from modified omoplata control. You may know it as rubber guard.

"You understand, I didn't know about the rubber guard," explains Schembri when questioned on his omoplata variations. "The first time I ever heard of this rubber guard was in 2009 when I moved to America and opened my gym. When I first heard of rubber guard, people would say to me, 'Nino, but you invented the rubber guard, how can you not have heard of it' (laughs). One time, I did an interview and said I invented the omoplata and man, the next

"IT'S FUNNY REALLY THAT I AM THE FIRST JIU JITSU GUY TO BEAT SAKURABA, BUT I ENDED UP WINNING WITH THE KO"

SCHEMB

day people went crazy (laughs). I've learned that this is not the right thing to say."

Rubber guard is – of course – the name coined by Eddie Bravo within his 10th Planet system describing modified omoplata control. A combination of Bravo's exploits working for the UFC, close friendship with Joe Rogan and excellent marketing skills led to rubber guard becoming household terminology within jiu jitsu.

"I remember saying to a student, 'what is this rubber guard?' and then I checked a website and realised exactly what it was," says Schembri. "Of course I knew the position well, but in Brazil we don't call things x-guard or whatever, it's all just open guard. It's funny for me, because we do this for twenty or twenty five years, and then in 2009 I hear it called the rubber guard."

The rubber guard 'creator' is a title that consistently gets pinned on Eddie Bravo, supported in the main by the 10th Planet machine and his global media representation. Many jiu jitsu fans see Schembri as the original creator of what is now known as rubber guard, backed by long standing credentials as a jiu jitsu fighter and creator during the 90s. Though grappling fans will continue to debate who stakes claim to the rubber guard, Schembri himself seems less concerned.

"It's difficult for me to say I invented rubber guard," says Nino. "How can anyone say this? For me, whoever invented rubber guard doesn't mean anything. It's not important. But, in 2005 I visited America and my friend Scott Nelson and he took me to Eddie Bravo's academy. Understand, at this time I did not know who Eddie Bravo was. Anyway, Eddie showed some positions, I trained with all his students, but he didn't train with me. Eddie showed some gogoplata and some variations. To me it was funny, because he showed some of my positions.

"In 2010 or 2011 one of my students showed me Eddie's book and I think there was one bad thing in there. He said that 'Nino Schembri came to my academy to learn from me' – I don't think this is right to put this. He then put a small picture of a gogoplata and said something like, 'I stole this position from Nino Schembri'. So, I don't like this. I saw Eddie a few years ago and I never said anything about this to him. I just think it's weird."

Though it may not be important to Nino, the rubber guard creator debate is sure to continue on internet forums for years to come. Whatever your opinion, it goes without saying that both Nino and Eddie deserve much credit for thinking outside the box and looking to be creative within their jiu jitsu. Nino's efforts in particular demand huge credit, for there are not many fighters who've brought such a unique style to the table during their competitive years and proven its efficiency at the highest level.

"It makes me feel so happy man," beams Schembri on being considered one of jiu jitsu's most notable innovators. "I love the idea of being part of the history of jiu jitsu, so if people say I have helped develop the open guard, it makes me feel so happy. I love jiu jitsu and I love my lifestyle – jiu jitsu and surfing. I really enjoy teaching my students and teaching at seminars, so it's nice that people get excited to see my techniques."

Having picked up multiple world titles at the Tijuca Tennis Club, Nino perhaps turned a few heads by delving into the depths of MMA. As with his time at Gracie Barra, Schembri entered the MMA circuit during a hugely memorable boom within the sport – the pinnacle of Pride FC in Japan. So why did Nino opt to try his hand inside the ring?

"Well, I guess the money helped, especially back then when it was nearly impossible to make any money through just jiu jitsu," explains Schembri. "Understand, I moved to Pride FC because it was a big organisation and a very good opportunity. Back then if you were a jiu jitsu world champion, it didn't mean anything. Nowadays it's very different – you can open a gym, do seminars or whatever. It was just the way it was in my day. By the time I'd moved to MMA I'd already had a solid career in jiu jitsu."

Having relocated to Curitiba to train at the legendary Chute Boxe academy, it was time for Nino to learn how to strike. As a man known for his ability as a guard player, his new life as a Chute Boxe fighter could have been a daunting transition. After all, Chute Boxe was known as one of the toughest MMA gyms in Brazil.

"Man, it was hard sparring," states Schembri with a wry smile. "No doubt about it. It was a good experience. It was hard training, that's for sure, but they were really nice guys. It was a great experience for me during my time there."

It's a little known fact that Nino was the man who awarded Pride FC and UFC veteran Mauricio "Shogun" Rua his black belt in BJJ during their time together at Chute Boxe. Though predominantly a striker, Shogun's jiu jitsu game is extremely solid, highlighted by his great array of leg locks.

Due in no small part to Chute Boxe's close relationship with Pride FC, Schembri took his MMA bow in May 2001 in Japan, winning by armlock inside the first eight minutes. With only one more pro bout (and victory) under his belt, Nino then took on Japan's golden boy, Kazushi Sakuraba, on his home turf.

At this stage, Sakuraba had already earned his nickname "The Gracie Hunter", having bested Royler, Ryan and Renzo in the ring. As fate would have it, Schembri would become the first jiu jitsu fighter to defeat Sakuraba, though the win came in unpredictable fashion!

"It's funny really that I am the first jiu jitsu guy to beat Sakuraba, but I ended up winning with the KO," says Nino with a smile. "In my first fight with him my instructor said to put him on the ground, but the first seven minutes was just me boxing with him. It was a little weird actually – it wasn't a plan. I had a hard time in that fight; he broke my nose. And then I managed to get a Muay Thai clinch and knock him out with knees.

"The whole Pride experience was just amazing, it really was a special time I think. All the events were huge and I am proud to be part of that history. I miss those days a lot. Jiu jitsu is always a small stage, you know? I've never fought in jiu jitsu with a crowd of over 5,000 people. When I fought Sakuraba in Pride, there were over 30,000 people in a stadium. It was just crazy. These memories will last forever.

"Actually, if you watch my second fight in Pride against Sakuraba – I think in 2003 – I use the rubber guard in there to control him and punch. This was when I was training at Chute Boxe, so I was already using the position in MMA back then. That just reminded me (laughs)."

Nino was just one of a number of Chute Boxe representatives that Sakuraba faced during his Pride FC career, which led to the Japanese star heading to Brazil for training.

"Sakuraba did move to Chute Boxe for four

"IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO SAY I INVENTED RUBBER GUARD. HOW CAN ANYONE SAY THIS? FOR ME, WHOEVER INVENTED RUBBER GUARD DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT"

months to train after our fight, this is true," says Schembri. "We trained many, many times. His grappling is very good – he's one of those danger guys, you know? He can submit very quickly. It's not really a jiu jitsu game, but a real danger game."

With his career as a competitor no longer a priority, Nino continues to teach from his two academies in the US. With buzzing academies full of young, fresh and talented fighters, Schembri still keeps an active eye on all the latest technique developments.

"I am a fan of the evolution of the sport and I think it's amazing; I love to see these new things happening like the berimbolo and stuff like this," says Nino. "Evolution is important. But, the other side of me disagrees as well. Why? Because some new things will not work in MMA. I would also question the way people fight now, or how some people fight. The idea of using the berimbolo to sweep, but maybe only score an advantage then hold for 10 minutes is not jiu jitsu.

"It is this reason that I prefer to watch one superfight than watch the Worlds where people are playing with advantages. I don't want to say bad things, but this is how I feel. I like the berimbolo, but I don't like it when you see people force and force for one position. You hear of some famous guys drilling for hours the berimbolo and then more berimbolo. I'd like to see these champions then fight MMA. In my time, I proved that jiu jitsu is efficient in MMA.

"Look at Fabricio Werdum, he's done an incredible job developing his striking now in MMA. But, if you go to the ground, he has incredible jiu jitsu as well. How many jiu jitsu guys could do what Werdum or Jacare does with their jiu jitsu in MMA? Berimbolo in the cage and you'll get punched in the face. I guess I learned a different way. I don't know, I think it makes me a little sad, because maybe we have lost a little bit of the spirit of jiu jitsu. But, it's okay, we look to the future."

For a man known as a flamboyant guard player during his heyday, it's refreshing to hear that Nino still believes in the solid principles of jiu jitsu. In an ever growing spectrum of lapel grips, inversions and 50/50, we must all remember that jiu jitsu is about more than winning a sports match; it's about creating the tools to protect yourself in a fight.

"Don't get me wrong, I love to create when I'm on the mat and play with crazy techniques," explains Nino. "But, at the same time, I believe the best jiu jitsu is basic jiu jitsu. I love flying armbars, reverse omoplatas and stuff like that, but the basics work best. When I say basics, I mean self-defence jiu jitsu. I repeat, we have a lot of champions today that wouldn't last in real fights. I don't actually teach much self-defence at my academy: why? Because most guys nowadays don't want to learn this – I have to make a living too (laughs)."

Having been settled in the US for many years and fully immersed in his jiu jitsu lifestyle, Schembri couldn't be happier. In conversation, Nino is polite, articulate and more than happy to indulge us with his amazing stories. So what does the future hold for the open guard master?

"I am so happy with my life as a teacher, as I've just opened my second academy," says Nino. "That said, I would enjoy a match with Eddie Bravo – gi or nogi. But, this is just for the sport of jiu jitsu, as I think it would be a good fight. I like Eddie, so it's not about bad blood or anything like that.

"Looking back at my time, I feel comfortable with my career in MMA and jiu jitsu, I always did my best. I had some personal problems, which changed my direction away from MMA. But, it's ok; we all have challenges in life. The past is the past and we can only look to the future."

BEHIND THE BRANDS

"IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT THE DESIGN. THERE ARE LOTS OF BRANDS POPPING UP THAT ARE SET UP UP BY GREAT DESIGNERS AND THEY LOOK FANTASTIC. BUT YOU ARE NOT SETTING UP A DESIGN BUSINESS, YOU ARE SETTING UP A RETAIL COMPANY"

The landscape of brands within the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu scene has expanded in recent years, and for the past four or five years one brand has been a dominant force in the UK, Europe and, increasingly, on the world scene; Tatami Fightwear. Founded in 2009 by Gareth Dummer and Lee Jones, Tatami has now grown into a powerhouse of jiu jitsu apparel. In this interview Lee and Gareth share their experiences of starting the brand and give their insight into making it such a success.

What would you say was the single factor that motivated you to begin your company?

It was back in 2008. I (Gareth) was teaching BJJ to children at a community project. I had a penchant for getting the blingiest and flashiest gis I could get from sites like Budovideos and Brazilian Fightwear. Parents of the children would come up to me and ask where their son could get a gi like that and I could see the disappointment in their faces when I said they were from Brazil or the USA and would cost about £200.

So me and Lee were on a flight back from the Europeans in 2008 and I said that I would love to start a gi company in the UK that could provide much better quality and designs than were currently seen in Europe. We started working on our first samples and the rest is history.

When you first began, BJJ commerce was still in a relatively early state of development - what platforms and methods did you first use to market your brand to your intended audience?

When we first started, funds were tight. We were lucky that I have always been a bit of a hobbyist web developer and I was able to build our site for next to nothing. Looking back, it was terrible and our product images were even worse, lol. Back then your best friends were the BJJ & MMA forums and reviews by bloggers such as Meerkatsu. But our biggest gains were when we went down the traditional route of visiting clubs and sponsoring fighters. In fact some of our fighters have been with us since 2009.

Social media is a large component for any company, how much does social media play in terms of your general brand output?

Social media is very useful and it is a great tool. But it is only one component of a very large machine. We gain great feedback, both positive and negative, from social media, that helps us to steer the brand in the right direction.

What are the other methods you use to market your brand, e.g. print advertising, tournament ad boards, product placement etc?

As I mentioned before, social media is only a small component of our marketing plan. We currently advertise in all the major BJJ magazines both print and digital. In 2014 we have sponsored every single IBJJF event in Europe, giving us a great platform to engage customers from across Europe. A large percentage of our advertising though comes from the athletes wearing our products. They are the ambassadors for the brand and do a great job in promoting our products and values.

Online users tend to be quite fickle and outspoken; how do you handle folk

complaining, writing negative comments and spreading untrue rumours about your company?

People will always form their own opinion of a product. I come from a high end retail background and from the first day we started the number one point on our mission statement was "To provide unrivaled customer service". So if someone comments that they have a genuine problem we will sort it, no questions asked. Negative comments are of course a person's personal opinion and that is what social media is all about, sharing how you feel. If someone is spreading false rumours then we do not tend to worry about it, as the thousands of loyal customers we have are testament to our products and service and I think that speaks for itself.

What kind of difficulties did you face when sourcing garment makers and suppliers, especially those from Pakistan, China and other countries outside your own?

Dealing with suppliers in your own country or abroad, you are always going to have problems. In fact I think one of the biggest issues we have had was from a UK company. When we first started we spent thousands of pounds on products from factories. In the end we found a supplier we believed we could work with. Difficulties can range from communication errors, technical issues or more concerning, misinformation. But as long as the information you provide them is as detailed as it can possibly be you should be ok.

What kind of hours can a brand owner of a start-up expect to churn over in the beginning?

When we first started I was working full time. A normal working week would be 70-80 hours per week. Even when I finished full time work we would work 60+ hours per week. But it never ends. Even if you are not at the office there is always a call to take or an email to answer. A company owner never rests and is always working.

In your experience, what was one of the worst problems or surprise scenarios that occured in the early days of your brand and how did you counter this moving forward?

Our second batch of gis had a very bad error on them. Our logo was back to front. In those early days an error like that could have closed us down but the factory was willing to work with us and we sorted it out. That made us realise the importance of sampling before every shipment.

Your brand has built up over the years and is now synonymous with jiu jitsu, grappling and I would probably include MMA. Do you intend to grow into a different or wider market sector, e.g. other sports or maybe general leisure wear?

We do have plans to diversify with other brands into other sectors but this is still in the early days. Tatami will always be purely for the BJJer. I think if you do too much with one brand you lose focus on your core business.

To aspiring new brands, what is your single message or piece of helpful advice you could offer?

It's not all about the design. There are lots of brands popping up that are set up up by great designers and they look fantastic. But you are not setting up a design business, you are setting up a retail company. Do your research first about running a retail business and the rest will follow.

TATAMI FIGHTWEAR

FOUNDED:
2009

OWNERS:
GARETH DUMMER & LEE JONES

BASED:
PORT TALBOT, WALES

FIRST PRODUCTS:
THE TATAMI COMPETITION GOLD WEAVE GI AND SEVERAL RASH GUARDS

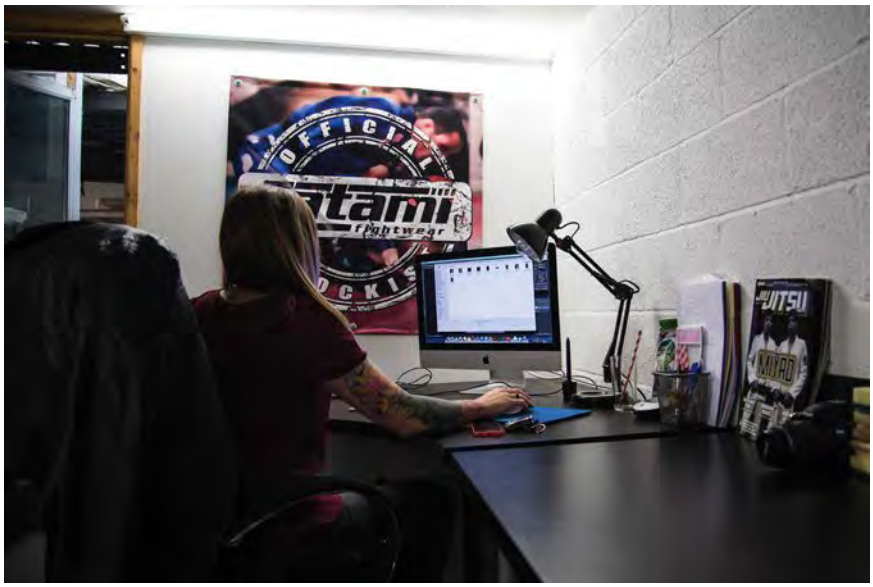
STAFF:
SEVEN

PRODUCT OUTPUT PER YEAR:
IN 2014 (UP TO THIS ARTICLE) TATAMI HAVE LAUNCHED 51 PRODUCTS

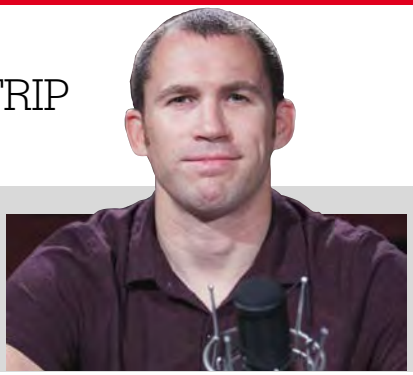
BRAND IDENTITY:
NOT AFRAID TO DO SOMETHING AGAINST THE NORM

NUMBER OF SPONSORED ATHLETES:
AS OF OCTOBER 2014, 48 ATHLETES

WEBSITE:
WWW.TATAMIFIGHTWEAR.COM



BUDO JAKE | MY FIRST TRIP TO BRAZIL



SOME READERS MIGHT FIND IT SURPRISING THAT I HAD NEVER BEEN TO BRAZIL, CONSIDERING HOW INVOLVED I AM WITH THE BJJ WORLD. I ALWAYS KNEW I WOULD GO SOMEDAY BUT FOR SOME REASON THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY HADN'T COME ABOUT - UNTIL A COUPLE MONTHS AGO.

I love jiu jitsu, both the new school and the old school. There's one guy that, in my eyes, is the centrepiece of the old and the new. His name is Fernando Terere and he's a two time world champion at black belt. If you don't know his name, surely you know some of his students: Andre Galvao, Cobrinha, Lucas Lepri, Michael Langhi, Sergio Moraes, and many others who have trained with him.

Due to some personal problems Terere dropped out of the scene for a few years, right when he was at the peak of his competition career. He had some incredible matches with the likes of Roger Gracie, Marcelo Garcia (Terere won all four times),

Jacare, and many more. His always attacking, well rounded game, made him a fan favourite for many of us.

My Brazil travel plans quickly started developing when I heard that Terere was finally ready to film an instructional series. After being in the BJJ video production business for over ten years, there's not many projects that really get me excited, but this one certainly did!

After much discussion back and forth with Terere we had decided to film a six volume series and an episode of my documentary series *"Rolled Up"*. Ten days should be plenty we thought. Oh boy, we thought wrong! Within a couple hours of landing in Rio we were already in Terere's gym filming. Despite my preconceived notion, Terere is a super hard worker! As the days went on it became apparent that this was going to be much more than a six volume series. He simply had so many amazing techniques to show! I'm not easily impressed, as I've seen and filmed so many instructionals, but I can honestly say that most of what he showed had not been shown on any other series. I certainly wasn't going to tell him to stop teaching so many techniques!

Ten days later, we had filmed a nine volume series covering Terere's complete game from takedowns, to guard passes, to sweeps and submissions. I found it very interesting to see some movements that looked very Galvao like, and other moves looked more Cobrinha's style. Of course it makes sense since they both trained with Terere.

While the trip was mostly spent filming, we were able to get away a little bit. I was able to enjoy a short trip to the beach - appropriately named Devil's Beach, as the waves were brutally strong.

I also stopped by to visit three other gyms, all amazing in their own ways.

The original Carlson Gracie gym. This gym just celebrated its 40th anniversary! You can just feel the history in this place.

The Alliance gym in Rio is run by Alexandre Paiva. This gym is in stark contrast to Carlson's gym. This one has brand new mats, nice showers and a real "executive" feel.

Last up was the Gracie Barra Rio Matriz gym. I had to visit the Rio HQ of my team!

While it was my first trip to Brazil it certainly won't be my last. Before I sign off, I'll leave you with a few myths that I'd been told many times. Some turned out to be true, and some not.

"AFTER MUCH DISCUSSION BACK AND FORTH WITH TERERE WE HAD DECIDED TO FILM A SIX VOLUME SERIES AND AN EPISODE OF MY DOCUMENTARY SERIES *"ROLLED UP"*. TEN DAYS SHOULD BE PLENTY WE THOUGHT. OH BOY, WE THOUGHT WRONG!"

MYTH #1 BRAZIL IS REALLY EXPENSIVE NOW

I don't doubt that it used to be cheaper, but for the average American you won't find it to be much different to the US, or Europe I'd imagine. As long as you're not buying electronics, cell phones, or tennis shoes you'll be alright.

MYTH #2 BRAZIL IS SO DANGEROUS!

This is one myth that concerned me. So many Brazilians told me their horror stories of theft and worse that occurred to them or their family members in Brazil. I have to say that I never felt in any danger during my (short) stay. Even walking the streets at night or being in the favela (although I was with Terere) I always felt safe. If you're from a big city you probably have an idea of where is safe and where isn't. Interesting side note, a couple of girls chased down my business partner Budo Dave on the street. Somehow his iPhone had fallen out of his pocket a block back. I'm not sure he would have been lucky enough to have it returned if that happened in Los Angeles.

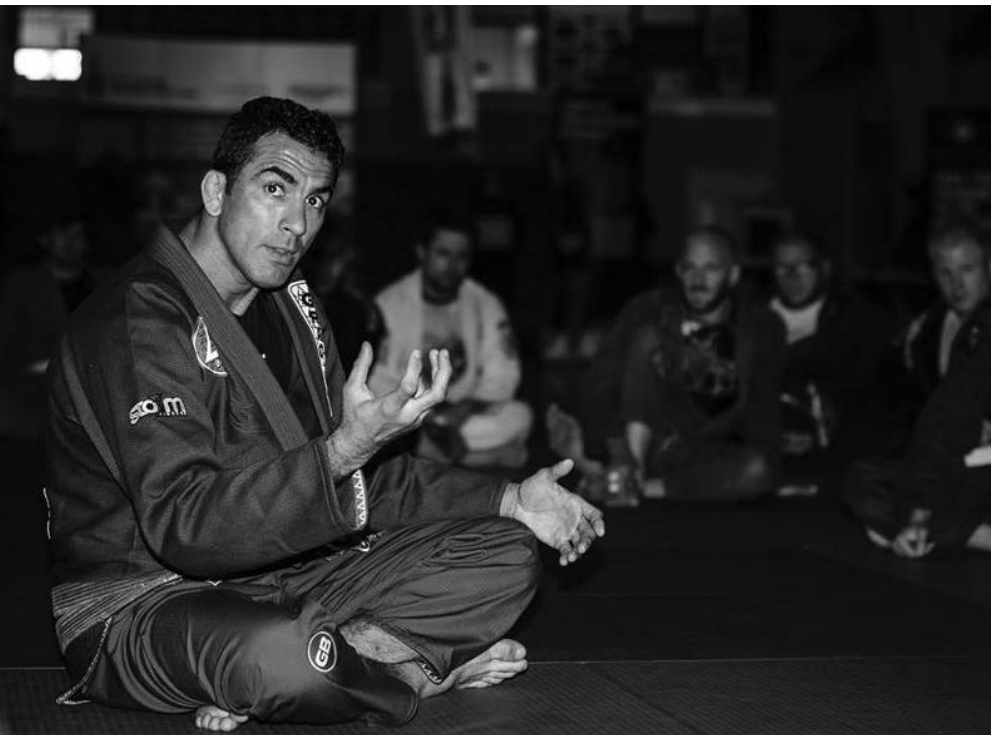
MYTH #3 EVERY BLACK BELT SHOULD VISIT BRAZIL AT LEAST ONCE

Many guys told me this over the years and while I agreed, now that I've been there I can say that I emphatically agree. I would also add that if you can make it to Japan also you will have a complete view of the cultures that created and shaped the art of jiu jitsu.

Well, that's it for this edition. Keep an eye on Budovideos.com for the episode of *Rolled Up* with Terere and his instructional series (DVD, app, and on-demand). I know you're going to like them!

ROYAL MARINES

350 CHALLENGE



"WE HAD ROYAL MARINES OF ALL AGES AND RANKS, INCLUDING A LOT OF SENIOR OFFICERS WHO CAME DOWN"

The Royal Marines are celebrating their 350th anniversary this year, the organisation having been established on October 28th 1664. Consequently, a variety of charitable events are being organised across the UK to celebrate and raise money for good causes.

One such event brought together two close communities: the Royal Marines and the UK Brazilian Jiu Jitsu scene. From 15th September - 29th September the Royal Marines competed in a 350 Challenge, training for 350 hours straight - all for charity.

The event became a huge success, raising nearly £6000 pounds for charity and attracting big names from the UK scene such as Braulio Estima, Tom Barlow, Pedro Bessa, Neil Simkin and Paul Cole, who all helped out and gave seminars.

The event's organiser, Sam Sheriff, stated that the primary aim of the 350 Challenge was to raise funds for "The Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund" which raises money for marines who are suffering from injury, recovering from operations, or to help the families of deceased marines.

"It's a charity that's very much close to our hearts," explains Sam. "My aim with the challenge was to raise money for the charity whilst also raising the profile of Brazilian jiu jitsu in the Royal Marines community and to try and get more Royal Marines taking part in the sport."

Sheriff had been introduced to Brazilian jiu jitsu in 2004, and since then it has been a pivotal component within Royal Marine combat courses. "I became very involved in grappling from learning from the program," says Sam. "I've always made sure that if the guys have had any downtime when they're not out on operations that they have had the opportunity to do some grappling. When I came back to the UK in 2009 I found a Brazilian jiu jitsu club (Fightworx in Torquay under Darren Yeoman) and I began training under him."

Wanting to grow the sport within the Royal Marines, Sheriff worked to establish ordered clubs within the organisation: "It wasn't until I went to Scotland to work with a unit called 45 Commando that I actually started our first club within the Royal Marines. It was only a small group of us training, so what we'd do is train and then compete at local tournaments in Scotland and the UK."

Having formed an association boasting over 180 active members, Sheriff believes that thanks to the 350 Challenge, there is now a greater appreciation and understanding of BJJ within the Royal Marines.

"It was a big part of the challenge that we wanted to open it up to the whole of the Royal Marines to come down and get involved," says Sam. "We had Royal Marines of all ages and ranks, including a lot of senior officers who came down, had never grappled and are now fans of the sport."

With the 350 Challenge now completed, the association is very excited at the idea of doing another challenge. In the meantime they are looking forward to competing at home and abroad.

"We want to compete as a full team against the other service teams throughout the UK," explains Sam. "So that would be the army, the RAF, along with civilian competitions. For next year we want to embark on a sports tour of the United States, do a training camp and compete against the United States Marines."

The 350 Challenge was open to all those willing to roll, and as Sheriff relates, it was a great sight seeing so many people willing to roll for a great cause: "It was fantastic, all the civilians that got involved and showed their support by coming and participating in the seminars. It was a fantastic

"MY AIM WITH THE CHALLENGE WAS TO RAISE MONEY FOR CHARITY WHILST ALSO RAISING THE PROFILE OF JIU JITSU IN THE ROYAL MARINES"

feeling looking out on the mats, seeing civilians and marines share in what they love and have in common. Having all the different clubs all come up here was a fantastic experience."

Having the support from high level black belts proved to be a huge motivational factor for those competing in the challenge. "It was incredibly humbling to have so many legends of our sport to genuinely want to be a part of the challenge," says Sam. "We had a different black belt down every day, and each one taught a completely different type of seminar. So we were getting all this fantastic information in creative ways which really picked us up and kept us motivated and inspired."

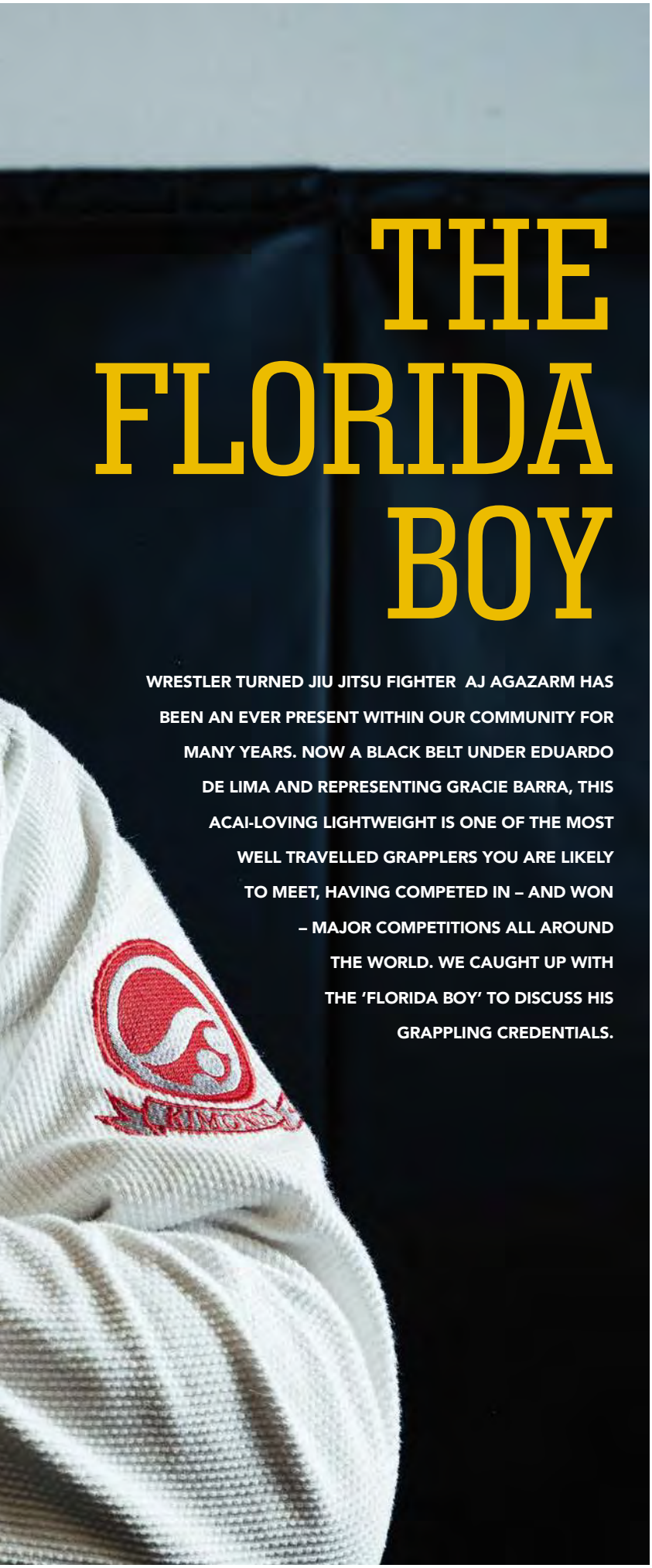
In terms of actually competing in the challenge itself, Sheriff admits to not fully anticipating how tough the challenge would be, both mentally and physically: "We all know what it's like to grapple, it really doesn't take that long before you start to feel fatigue. I got a big poster made up with 350 hours so that every hour that went by, we'd cross it off. It was quite therapeutic taking off those hours."

As the hours counted down, those involved realised the realities of the challenge. "We broke into a sentry routine," says Sam. "So we would have a minimum of two guys on the mat rolling and then we would have the other guys in sleeping bags, and then once it was their turn the next guys would get woken up and start training.

"It's a good routine and it's something that's based on a system that we use during operations (obviously it's quite a different experience). It was worth it, and it was a lot more arduous than I had anticipated, it really was."

The enduring nature of the challenge became obvious to those involved as the challenge went on. For the small regular team who competed for the full 15 days, it quickly became apparent that this was a wholly different experience: "There was something genuinely special about getting up out of your sleeping bag at three in the morning, when it's dark and freezing cold, then getting on the mats for training for a few hours. It really was so unique."

Make sure to check out the Royal Marines Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Association's fan page on Facebook.



THE FLORIDA BOY

WRESTLER TURNED JIU JITSU FIGHTER AJ AGAZARM HAS BEEN AN EVER PRESENT WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY FOR MANY YEARS. NOW A BLACK BELT UNDER EDUARDO DE LIMA AND REPRESENTING GRACIE BARRA, THIS ACAI-LOVING LIGHTWEIGHT IS ONE OF THE MOST WELL TRAVELLED GRAPPLERS YOU ARE LIKELY TO MEET, HAVING COMPETED IN – AND WON – MAJOR COMPETITIONS ALL AROUND THE WORLD. WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE 'FLORIDA BOY' TO DISCUSS HIS GRAPPLING CREDENTIALS.

Great to talk to you AJ. Can you give me a little bit of a background about your first introduction to jiu jitsu and how you started?

I started wrestling in college and the first college I went to was a small NA school where I was wrestling on the team with some friends that were involved in MMA and the guys, one of the guys I was friends with… I went to take him to a fight somewhere, and he took me as his corner man. And when I got to the fight, one of the guys in another division didn't show up to fight one guy. It was an amateur fight and the guy asked me and my friend if I would step in and I just kind of went on a whim and said 'sure, why the hell not'. What else do I have to do? You know? So I did it and I managed to submit my guy in the first minute. I told my dad about it and he said there's a really good jiu jitsu school and I had no idea what jiu jitsu even was.

What did you submit him with?

If you watch the video it looks like a rear naked choke but it wasn't even close. I think he just tapped because I got to his back.

So your dad said there was a school?

Yeah, so my dad said there was a school really close to where I live and in the summer he was going to take me there to check it out. He called Eduardo de Lima, who is my professor now; a fourth degree black belt and I think he was on his way to his fifth under Master Carlos, to tell him he has a wrestler that's going to come train. Eduardo laughed on the phone and said "Oh, bring the wrestler to me." So we got there and Dad kinda said, "I want you to make him a world champion". And from there it's just history.

As you said, you wrestled throughout high school and college. What was your initial reaction when you started training jiu jitsu? Because I'm guessing it was quite a shift in mentality between the two types of training.

In the beginning I was very intense in wrestling. I was wrestling in college, and so my stamina was at its peak and going into jiu jitsu classes was very different than going into a wrestling class. And Eduardo did a really good job of shaping and moulding me. I think that was what kind of… what brought my passion for the sport the way it did, because he developed that, you know? He was able to intercept a lot of the drive and determination I had from wrestling and shape and mould me for the sport of jiu jitsu. And I thought that was really cool because I see a lot of wrestlers and they come into the sport and their success and transition isn't as seamless. I felt because of the leadership I was under with Eduardo it was something that really meshed well.

So you started training in Florida, where you're from?

So I continued training under Eduardo, when I first started training it was in the summer. I trained twice a day, six days a week and I really enjoyed every single training session. It was in one of the training sessions, I remember being in a triangle with one of the brown belts at the time, his name was Rich Travis. Rich was Eduardo's first black belt, but a brown belt at the time. He put me in a triangle and had me, I was shaking him up and down on the mat and moving him all over and trying to get out of the triangle and inevitably I submitted. And that was one of the starting moments of really understanding jiu jitsu. I went through those training sessions numerous times throughout the summer.

And then I went on to participate in a seminar led by Master Carlos Gracie, who came down from Brazil to do the seminar at our school. I was a white belt at the time and he was talking with Eduardo and I could just tell because I wasn't speaking Portuguese at the time, it was completely American, but I could tell that they were communicating something in regards to me. At the end of the seminar, Eduardo came to me and asked me if I wanted to move to Brazil because Master Carlos wanted me to go down there and live with his family and train and get my black belt. So you can imagine I was at a very unique crossroad in my life and faced with a decision that, at the time, that maybe I didn't really understand the severity of it or the possibilities of it, but I knew it was a huge opportunity. But what was also important to me was the completion of my education: college. So I had to pass up the opportunity to move to Brazil and I went on to continue my education. I transferred schools actually to get into a bigger school. It was my desire to complete my college at Ohio State. I walked on the team there, then I graduated with a degree in finance. It's really funny how it all pans out and I don't want to make a long interview longer…

No, it's all really interesting. So I guess you're really lucky in many ways that you've had such great exposure to the likes of Carlos Gracie Jr and Kayron (Gracie). What are those guys like to be around on the mat day-to-day? I think a lot of people would love to be in that position.

Yeah, it's just like... it's like a brotherhood really, you know? I was very fortunate to start training with Eduardo, learning from Eduardo. He kind of brought me under his wing and introduced me to the people that

"EVERYTHING UP TO THE BLACK BELT FOR ME WAS ALWAYS JUST THE STEPPING STONE TO THE BEGINNING. THAT WAS WHAT I PUT IN MY JOURNALS WHEN I WAS WRITING MY CLASSES DOWN: WHAT I WAS LEARNING, WHAT I WAS BRINGING, WHAT I WAS ADAPTING TO. IT WAS ALWAYS JUST THE BEGINNING"

would inevitably continue my progress in the sport. And that was something I was really, really enthusiastic about.

At the time I was training under Eduardo and training for the Pan Ams, trying to recollect everything that I knew. So before the move to Ohio I had competed in the Pan Ams and I won the Pan Am championships as a blue belt. And at that time I was then moving to Ohio. So I had to pass. I wasn't going to be able to train with Eduardo. I went to Ohio and I thought I was not going to be able to train jiu jitsu at all. I was just going to focus on my wrestling at my school. When I got there, my aunt told me that there was a jiu jitsu school close to her so when I arrived there I looked up the place. It was a Relson Gracie Academy and Robin Geisler's the head professor over there. I walked in the school and I said, "Hello, my name is AJ and I train under Eduardo de Lima at Gracie Barra and I would like to train here if I could for the world championships, but I am Gracie Barra, if that's possible."

They welcomed me with open arms and I was very fortunate to also win the blue belt World Championships. Then from there is really when I had to begin focusing solely on my education and wrestling. I continued training back and forth when I was back and forth from Florida. I did a few tournaments at purple belt.

It was actually funny, you know, like I said, just a really funny story. I was promoted the following year to purple belt at the tournament, at the World Championships, because I guess people wrote letters saying that I shouldn't be competing as blue belt anymore. So I was promoted at the tournament and ended up taking third and from there I was really in the heart of my degree and was focusing on that. Once I finished I moved down to Florida to continue training with Eduardo and went out to the Pan Am championships. I won as a brown belt and at that time Master Carlos had asked if I wanted to stay in California, live with them and teach at the school and go from there. So that opportunity had made its way back around, and I thought that was really cool.

Absolutely. So you've got countless tournament successes, you're known for being a great competitor. Are there any moments in your tournament career that really stand out to you as highlights?

Yeah, I think I always try to exceed what I think of at the moment as my best performance. One of the moments I'm really proud of is the brown belt Pan Ams 2012. I was dealing with losses to guys numerous times and I ended up beating them at that tournament.

Did you fight Steve Martin from the UK?

Yes, I fought Steve Martin in the finals. I can't remember who I fought in the semis but for the quarterfinals I fought Sinistro. He had beaten me twice before that in the quarter finals at purple belt, so beating him at the brown belt level was really just kind of a sweet victory for me. I didn't even care about winning the tournament, I just cared about beating him. When I beat him I knew I was going to win the tournament. And then I think the highlight match when I really felt the fun of jiu jitsu, was the semi-finals of Pans in 2013 against Victor Silverio.

Now you are a black belt and you've been competing a lot. How have you found adapting to black belt on the absolute elite stage? How have you found that transition?

You know, everything up to the black belt for me was always just the stepping stone to the beginning. That was what I put in my journals when I was writing my classes down: what I was learning, what I was bringing, what I was adapting to. It was always just the beginning. Now that I got my black belt I took on the competition scene and wanted to compete as much as I could.

If you wind the clock back, really, I only started jiu jitsu because of MMA, so when I did it I said I'm not going to continue MMA until I get my black belt in jiu jitsu. And then when I got my black belt, I didn't want to stop. I knew it was something I wanted to continue to do and when I started training jiu jitsu I said I wanted to understand the sport entirely. I wanted to understand the culture of jiu jitsu, the lifestyle behind it and for me that was competing all the time: travelling, speaking Portuguese, eating acai… and with that I felt I was really completely understanding the martial art. And there are some Americans out there that don't speak Portuguese and they're black belts in jiu jitsu, too. I don't think it's a bad thing but I think it would be really advantageous for them to start learning. I can't imagine going to a tournament now and not speaking Portuguese.

I'm sure it's a real benefit. You are very well-travelled and you have competed all over the place. Do you find the competition changes much depending on where you are? Competing in the US or Europe or Brazil... are there any differences?

Right now, I think in terms of media production America has the biggest thing. In terms of authenticity, Brazil. In terms of ecstatic, passionate fans, Europe has been more enjoyable in that aspect. But jiu jitsu is this martial art that has grown to be something far greater than anything that any of us really comprehend at the moment and it's enjoyable wherever I go. But I think in my head, jujitsu is going to be a stepping stone for me. It's taken me to countries I never imagined I'd be in to taking me to learning two languages I never

thought I'd learn, and for me what's really exciting is the travel. It's being here in London for the first time and welcomed by Roger and by all you guys at his school and before that I was in Paris and welcomed by Julian and the Gracie Barra family there; it's really awesome.

Because you do so well people are always interested to see you fight, and I just wondered if you feel that. Do you feel that when AJ steps to the mat, that people are aware of who you are and do you feel added pressure because of that, or do you just feel the pressure you put on yourself?

For me, I don't have any pressure to fight. I don't have nerves before I fight and I think that's come because of years of competition and when you say that people look forward to the matches, I think that's great, because really that's why I do this. I do it to leave lessons for my brother; he's following in my footsteps, so to speak. People that can pull things from me, I think that's awesome because I'm doing the same from people around me; Roger, Master Carlos, all the guys out there. I'm doing the same. If I can be that kind of light for other Americans and non-Brazilians, absolutely.

You just mentioned you write journals, training journals? Tell me a little bit about that.

So when I was a blue belt and a purple belt and a little bit of my beginning as a brown belt, when I was more under the tutelage of Eduardo, taking his classes every day, I would learn things in his class and I would go back and write down what I learned. And for me that really helped me to comprehend my progression and why I was doing what I did; it gave me vision and goals and it enabled my passionate side for the sport.

What would you say your immediate goals are? You've said that now you've got your black belt you don't want to stop. But do you still have one eye on MMA?

I absolutely have some vision to take jiu jitsu, my jiu jitsu, into MMA and the UFC and that will be the plan for the year to come. I also have some goals left in jujitsu and I think on top of it all is the travel. I want to continue to travel and go to as many countries as I can and enjoy it while I can. I was brought into a jiu jitsu school when the majority of the guys at the time were in their mid-30s to 40s. I think I kind of understand what you're saying in terms of the question, because they kind of looked at me as the golden kid. They all brought me under their wing and were pushing me to be that guy for them. I remember something distinctly. When I was turning nineteen all the guys

would say, "How old are you?" and I would say, "I'm eighteen years old" and they would all say, "Man, I would give anything to be eighteen again". And I just laughed, maybe because I didn't really understand what it felt like to be in their shoes. Then it really started to sink in when I turned nineteen and they were all continuing to say that, that you're young, you have the ability to do it. And they're all in their mid-30s or 40s and that much wiser than me, looking at me saying this is what you should do. You have a gift, you have a talent, take it and run with it and that's been my motivating factor for a long time: following that direction.

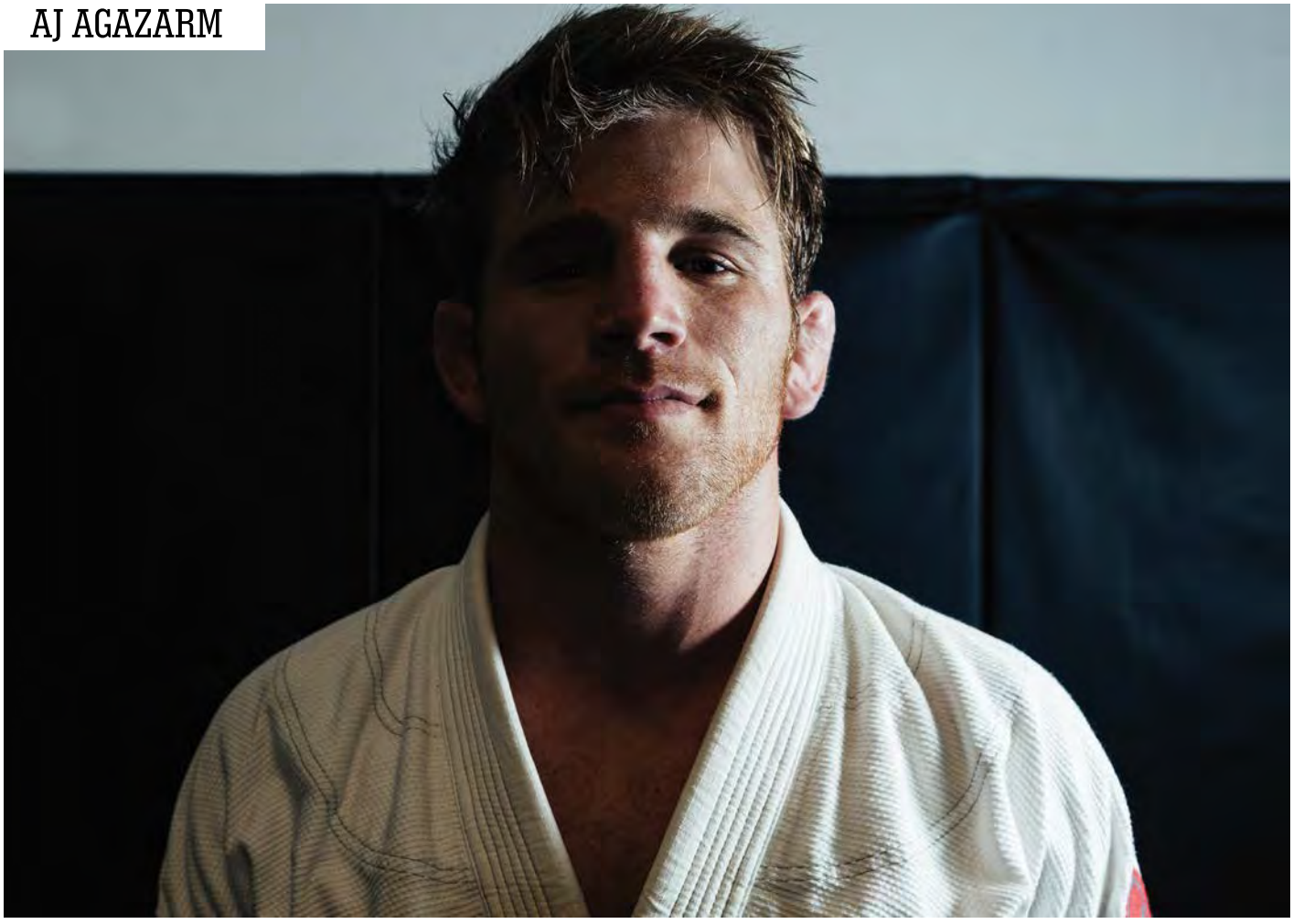
Fantastic. Thanks for your time, I really appreciate it. Was there anything else you would like to say to the readers in closing?

If you guys are making acai or enjoying acai be sure to send it to my Instagram and Twitter @thefloridaboy.

What would be your tips for making a perfect bowl of acai?

I'm sorry guys, I put out one video with BudoVideos and we're actually talking about something really special, I can't really discuss it. I can't say what it is right now but we're talking about something special in the works. But I made a bowl and I showed a bowl with a lot of toppings and there's going to be some things that are going to come, but I've got to say, try to simplify your bowls the best you can and try to enjoy acai entirely without needing all of the other fruits. Mix it up for sure but it's an amazing thing. Acai gives you wings.

AJ AGAZARM



KINGZ
KINGZ
KINGZ
REIGNING JIU JITSU.

MACHADO TALKS

IN JIU JITSU, GO FOR THE LONG RUN!

THE SITUATION

Jiu jitsu, like any other subject, has a body of knowledge and a breakdown from easier to more difficult techniques. A student who starts has the need to know first how to survive without getting hurt or hurting others. That is why self defence and break falls play a critical role. There are several factors that can interfere with the normal sequencing of learning, which may include what emphasis there is at a particular "Academy". Those geared more towards competition, for example, will often push the learning curve towards the skill set that makes the most difference in sports events, like the scoring system and particular trendy techniques often used in most recent contests (berimbolos, de la Rivas, etc.). Strategy is geared more towards managing matches than ensuring survival or strengthening the basics. Such an approach can be used, as long as the other critical areas are also covered.

REALITY HAS TO PRECEDE RULES

The talked about paradox between sport jiu jitsu and street fighting should not be an issue when a student first learns how to deal with real life situations before engaging into sports and rules that may not include that perception. The worst thing is to see a champion of a BJJ tournament who cannot clinch against a sucker punch or gets stuck in a headlock!

SURVIVE WITHOUT COMPROMISING

Another approach that often pervades the martial arts environment is the gradual watering down of technical skills in order to create a business structure out of balance, where the studio becomes a day care centre (see after school programs, which I am not opposed to, as long as children learn awareness and basic skills), or a belt factory with the associated fees (break down the syllabus so much, and add several steps or ranks, each associated with a fee), and at the same time downgrading the product (the martial art in itself). I have no issues against a business and marketing system to generate a profitable academy, as long as the product does not get compromised along the way.

Let's take a look at some scenarios, which I think can contribute to rectify either of the cases above mentioned.

WHAT IS THE END GAME?

First, what is the mission? A school without a main purpose or goal will lack the mindset and culture to build a long lasting business. Here is my fifty cents worth of advice: teach from the most simple to the more complex. More skills does not equal more knowledge. The only knowledge worth having is the one that can be readily used. A student who is overwhelmed with either too many moves, or moves that are too complicated, will invariably become faulty at something. He/she may feel everyone else gets it but himself/herself. Get the basics first, get it down well, and the fancy can and will follow. I believe the mission should be to produce confident and capable students, versed in the foundation and able to defend themselves if need be. That is priceless; look in a parent's face after the son overcomes a bullying issue, or the depressed daughter who is now on top of her grades and making more friends, all due to the confidence they both gained through their martial arts training. That is top notch business, altogether!

LONGEVITY COMES FROM MOTIVATION, NOT INFATUATION

Secondly, what is the reason for a student to remain as one? Although there are several aspects that will make someone feel they belong somewhere, nothing beats a supportive environment, where instructors exercise caution, enthusiasm, and patience, as they disperse the knowledge. Then it comes to the training partners, who will reflect the instructor's approach by becoming supportive and inviting as well. But ultimately, it is by goal setting that a disciple will remain strong for long! The worst feeling for someone who crosses the initial steps into the training arena is the lack of a road map, a precise direction on where they stand and where they are headed. At that stage, students once wearing out their initial enthusiasm will eventually fall into a limbo. It is critical to set a timeline of where and when things will happen. When we play, we want to score, we want to cross the goal line, hit the target, leave the field knowing we got the worth and the growth! Jiu jitsu is no different, teach from the start what it takes to win, in this case, earn the next rank!

DO NOT MISS THE CHANCE BY SELLING OUT

Some places go to a different extreme, as I mentioned earlier, and become too engaged on promotions and graduations without enough attention to the quality of the training or techniques.

McDojos and Belt Factories are not the purpose of a school. It is sad when we witness a student getting a belt without earning it, just to satisfy the instructor's monetary ambitions. The balance between showing a student what it takes to earn a rank can only be fair if the dedication and skill set are there to back it up, with or without fees. Make the money, but build strength and character along with it, that is what makes it worth every minute on the mat!

PERSPIRE BEFORE INSPIRING

Third, understand that the mat is where we make peace and wear off the stress of other areas in a student's life. It is surprising for me to hear a certain student complain sometimes about his job, saying that the long shift of arduous and tedious work would be ok, as long as there was some jiu jitsu to be done by the end of the day. He often said that it did not matter how long it took while at work, he would anticipate the training session and that alone would mitigate the distress of doing a job to pay bills instead of making a living! Others would naturally quit smoking or drinking and junk food, so they could get better physically and eventually enhance their performance in training. It is often forgotten that before someone decides to do something good for himself, he has to find a reason behind it. Getting better at jiu jitsu is certainly a great motivator. And I would be a hypocrite if I did not take care of my health and lead a healthy lifestyle myself! Inspiration comes from perspiration. Remember, showing what you mean by doing it yourself first is a sure way to inspire others!

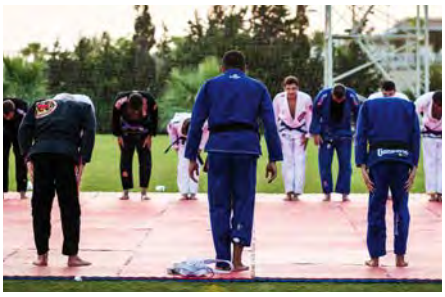
BE MINDFUL, FOR WHAT YOU SAY OR DO CAN ALTER A DESTINY

Fourth, what we say has a tremendous impact, and it is critical that we become aware, as instructors, that we are often placed in the role of a father or mentor figure. I still remember the day one of my students, who eventually became one of the first black belts I ever made, still as a white belt, asked me a decisive question regarding his career path. I knew then that anything I said would steer him in one direction or another. I did not want to tell him what I thought he should do, but instead told him to follow his heart. His choices were clear, to follow the martial arts or the corporate nine to five path. Whatever his choice was, I would support him wholeheartedly. Needless to say he chose the martial arts, and eventually became one of the most successful school owners in America. I am thankful for that opportunity, to be there at that time when someone in such a momentous period of his life needed the support he could not find anywhere else. Talk about being at the right place at the right time!

After more than forty-six years of actively training, and teaching since the early 80's, I have come to the conclusion I made the right choice by leaving a lawyer's suit and wearing instead a jiu jitsu gi. This journey has taken epic proportions since I arrived in the U.S. in the early 90's. I cannot fathom the numbers of people who I have been blessed to teach, and the many more yet to come. Like the art in itself, it is endless and always transforming itself. Like the ocean, jiu jitsu has no beginning, no borders, no limits, it just flows with the currents of time, from here to eternity! Keep on training, and remember, time is and will always be on your side, as long as you never stop doing it!

CARLOS MACHADO

9th Degree Coral Belt
Owner RCJ Machado Jiu-Jitsu Inc.



THE CONCEPT OF CONCEPTS

It seems that everyone is doing it: Keenan, Rickson, Nic and Kit, to name just a few: teaching 'concepts'.

But what are they? Should we be doing them? Are all other training modalities now obsolete?

In this article we will delve into the 'concept of concepts' and help you to decide if it is an idea that will help take your game to the next level.

WHAT IS A CONCEPT?

Some words, although we know their context and meaning, escape an accurate and definitive description: 'concept' is such a word. One dictionary gives this description: 'an abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances'. Another resource tells us, in contrast, that opposite words to concept are 'being' and 'concrete'.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

Dictionary terms help little in explaining what this new wave of 'concept' teaching actually means to us, as jiu jitsu lovers, and so, after much brain rattling, I have finally arrived at a BJJ definition of 'concept' that I think works: 'The root and heart of any given BJJ technique or tactic'.

To illustrate this definition, let's use the Rear Naked Choke as example. The choke itself has *lots of little steps* and instructions necessary to make it a success (run through them all in your head and attempt to list them); however, it only has *one key concept* (and a few other facilitating concepts, but we will sideline these for the time being): the concept of simultaneous compression of the carotid arteries in order to halt blood flow. The concept of compression is the *'root and heart of this BJJ technique'*.

'FLAT PACK' TEACHING

Up until this period of 'concept based' instruction, the most prominent teaching style found in academies globally has been 'explicit' teaching: what I like to call 'flat pack' teaching. 'Flat pack' refers to items that are usually bought in DIY stores that you take home and attempt to build yourself - tables, cabinets, shelving units etc. (the ones that almost always result in swearing, arguing with your partner and/or throwing the product out of the window - or is that just me?)

Think back to the instructions that come with these sorts of products: itemised, detailed, accurate, (if not a little boring), and, at times, complicated in their intricacy. For many of us, this is how we gain our knowledge of BJJ techniques: a comprehensive list of things 'to do', given to us by our instructors, that we go off and practise with a partner.

UPS AND DOWNS OF 'FLAT PACKING'

This type of teaching, like all things in life, comes with both its ups and downs. The positive side of this style is that it is very direct, clear and unambiguous. The students know what it is that they are expected to do and it is their job to reproduce the instruction as accurately as their abilities allow. It is an excellent style for working with beginners who, initially, may lack confidence and welcome a very direct 'hand holding' teaching approach.

The downside of this style is in its rigidity. Its precision stifles creativity, open-mindedness and invention. This is most apparent during the 'free rolling' part of the lesson; how many times have we all failed to integrate a 'flat pack' technique once our opponent is fully resisting?

THE UNPREDICTABLE WORLD OF BJJ

One of the massive strengths of BJJ is the 'pressure testing' of its students through high amounts of 'live rolling'. By its nature this environment is alive, fluid and unpredictable; it is the thing that makes so many of us fall in love with BJJ over other more stylized martial arts systems. This free rolling represents life itself with all its myriad expressions.

The demands of this type of activity then, must be matched by a teaching style that encourages free thinking, creative problem solving and the ability to come up with something 'on the spot' when the environment no longer matches expectations, e.g. your opponent throws a move on you from an angle you have never experienced before or, until now, even knew existed!

CONCEPT BASED TEACHING

With these types of challenges, it was clear that the expansive and creative world of BJJ would migrate toward a more 'open' and concept based teaching style- whether it realised it or not! Concept based teaching (also referred to as principle based learning) is not a new phenomenon; visit any academic institution and you will see it in action in every classroom at some point during the day.

Sheri Lennon, BJJ student and head teacher of Early Years education at a London school tells us, "Concept based learning is one of the key styles of teaching we learn at teacher training college. It is fundamental for creative learning and problem solving. It helps the student to make sense of the world around them by teaching them to comprehend and recognise similarities between groups of information. Conceptual learning helps students to create order out of chaos."

HOW CONCEPTS CAN HELP YOU

BJJ is a hugely diverse, complex and ever changing activity. It seems that there are endless techniques to master, tactics to consider and lessons to assimilate. It is a daunting and often overwhelming experience fraught with at best, frustration, and, in the extreme, the cause of some to give up on their learning.

Concepts can greatly alleviate this problem. One of the keystones of concept based teaching is the way in which it identifies the 'root' of a technique and encourages the learner to

recognise this root in *other* techniques. This recognition allows the student to subconsciously group similar techniques, eradicating the need for memorising hundreds.

Consider 'chokes' again: there are many, each with a comprehensive list of actions to follow. Let's say that three chokes (RNC, Bow and Arrow and the Ezekiel) have, on average, six steps of instruction each; this equals eighteen commands that a learner's brain must process. This is a lot of 'stuff' to remember! Now say, for this explanation that this same group of chokes share one concept -as mentioned before- the *concept of compression*; This is a lot less information to process.

Of course, there may be other concepts that are needed to support your attempts to 'compress the carotids', but even if you needed another two supporting concepts for each of the three chokes, the learner is still only having to process nine pieces of instruction as opposed to eighteen!

THE TEACHER WHO DOESN'T TEACH

The ultimate goal of a teacher - like riding the perfect wave - is to be able to teach a student to succeed with as little instruction as possible. Initially, whilst learning to teach, and latterly, after twenty years of teaching, I have discovered that ultimately, a teacher's role is not to teach but to put his/her students in an environment in which they will discover the lesson automatically: the great Albert Einstein told us, 'I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.'

Concept based teaching allows just this. Let's refer to our chokes one final time: if you understand the concept of compression, you may find yourself in a position during live rolling in which you are unsure what to do next. Although unclear of a definitive technique, you do however recognise that you have access to your opponent's neck! Remembering the 'concept of compression' you apply dual side pressure to the carotids and, bingo, your opponent taps.

It is very likely that you have pulled off a move that, as yet, you have not been formally taught (or maybe even invented yourself) by applying a single taught 'concept'. In my humble opinion, this is how the likes of the 'Shawn Williams guard', the 'de la Riva' and much of the '10th Planet' techniques have been 'discovered'.

CONCEPTS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

The most obvious and prolific example of this style of 'invention' is Keenan Cornelius: watch any of his fights, DVDs or YouTube offerings and you will see him time and again create, invent and reinvent jiu jitsu. He is the epitome of a 'concept' fighter.

As creative as he is though, his fundamentals and his understanding of concepts are amazingly sound. This makes his 'inventions' high quality, effective and reproducible.

THE FUTURE OF CONCEPTS

More and more students and instructors are beginning to fully appreciate the use of concept based learning and teaching. This type of learning is here to stay and will evolve over time, making learning easier, more effective and, possibly, shorten the time it takes to improve. We may well see the more 'forward thinking' academies considering their syllabus and possibly rewriting them from a 'concept perspective'.

There is however still a place for 'flat packing'. As already mentioned, beginners need this style of teaching early in their development and so do more advanced students when they discover a very specific problem in their game. I can use my own inadequacies (of which I have many!) to highlight this. Right now, in my tournament career, I am getting arm barred left, right and centre. I fully understand the 'concepts' behind the attack, but at this stage my brain is not computing, for whatever reason, such abstract notions: I need to be given step-by-step, 'flat pack' instruction until I learn an effective defence of the 'elbow killer'.

'Flat packing' also helps when you need a more 'closed' teaching structure, where high levels of control and discipline must be maintained, particularly when teaching challenging groups of children. The ultimate learning environment will, ideally, include a balanced blend of both styles of teaching.

FURTHER RESOURCES

This article is not meant to be a sales platform for any concept based resource but I list the following because I think they successfully demonstrate all that this article speaks of:

Nic Gregoriades and Kit Dale: Beyond Technique, concept focused BJJ - DVD

Stephan Kesting: Black belt grappling concepts- online course and DVD

Rickson Gracie: www.graciemag.com-online article and videos

Keenan Cornelius: Breakthrough Jiu Jitsu concepts - DVD

The last resource is this image (thank you to Gartista) that I personally used to finally and fully grasp the 'concept of concepts'.

The three stones in the centre represent the 'concepts' central to and at the 'heart of the action'; they create the many ripples that emanate as multiple techniques, tactics and ideas.

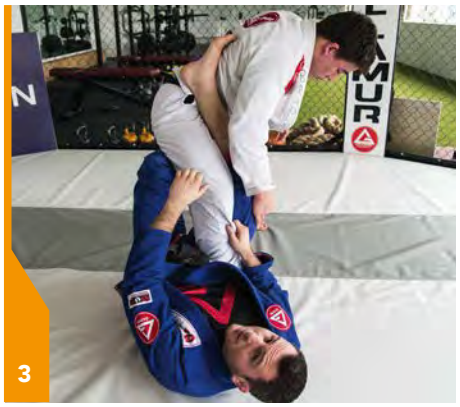
It is a perfect representation of 'concept based learning and teaching' and I hope it helps clarify these ideas for you too.

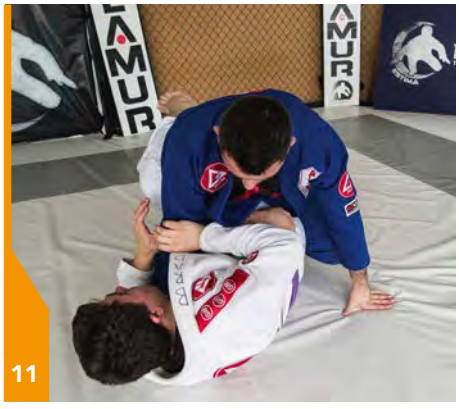
MATT JARDINE IS A FULL TIME MARTIAL ARTS TEACHER, WRITER AND BJJ FANATIC TRYING TO CHECK OUT ANY IDEA THAT WILL HELP IMPROVE HIS GAME (AND STOP HIM FROM GETTING ARM BARRED)…

MASTERCLASS

OVERHEAD SWEEP

1: Starting from the 50/50 guard, your opponent stands up and is looking to pass. **2/3:** Pass your opponent's right sleeve into your right hand, at the same time change your angle and bring your left foot across your opponent's hip. **4:** Next, grip the back of your opponent's trousers with your left hand and their right knee with your right hand. You are now in a perfect position to sweep. **5/6:** Pull your opponent towards you and take their weight off the floor. **7/8:** Extend your legs to sweep your opponent over your head. **9/10/11:** Arrive on top in a great position to pass the guard.





50/50 GUARD WITH:
NORBI NOWAK

NORBI NOWAK IS A BLACK BELT UNDER BRAULIO ESTIMA, INSTRUCTOR AT GRACIE BARRA BIRMINGHAM AND A MASTER OF BOTH 50/50 GUARD AND FOOTLOCKS. INSIDE THIS INSTALMENT OF MASTERCLASS, NORBI RUNS THROUGH SOME OF HIS FAVOURITE ATTACKS FROM 50/50, INCLUDING AN ARRAY OF SWEEPS AND SUBMISSIONS.

BACK TAKE FROM 50/50

1/2: Starting from the 50/50 guard, your opponent stands up and is looking to pass. **3:** Gain a grip on your opponent's right sleeve and use the momentum to start transitioning towards their back. **4:** Grip the back of your opponent's trousers with your left hand and gain control of their knee with your right hand. **5/6:** Bring both your knees to the back of your opponent's thighs. **7/8:** Extend your legs to force your opponent's legs to the back. 9: You are now free to start attacking your opponent's back.

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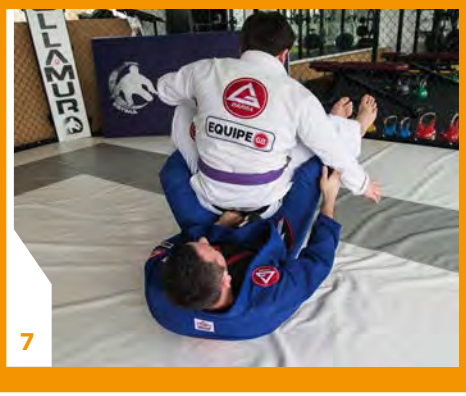

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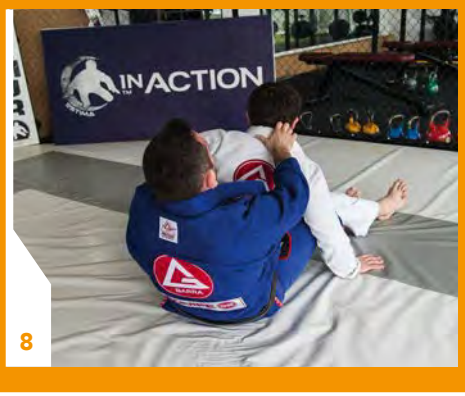

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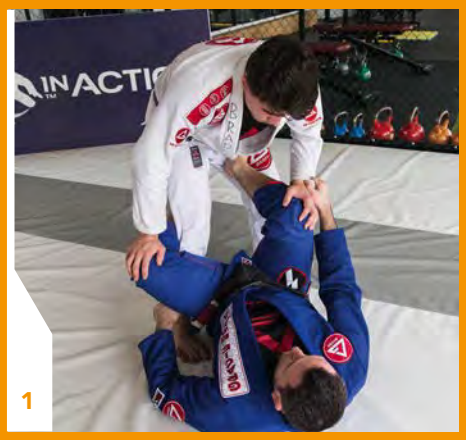
LEG DRAG COUNTER TO SWEEP

1/2/3/4: Having established solid grips on your opponent's left sleeve and right trouser, you have pulled them into a modified x-guard position. **5/6:** Often your opponent will control your right trouser leg and start to pass your guard with a leg drag. **7:** Once your right leg has been dragged past your opponent's right hip you are in danger of having your guard passed. Remain calm and keep control of your opponent's right foot. **8/9:** Control your opponent's right ankle with both hands, raise your hips and move their foot across your body to your right hip. This will prevent your guard from being passed and establish the 50/50 position.**10/11/12:** Pendulum your left leg and use the momentum to arrive on top, ready to pass your opponent's guard.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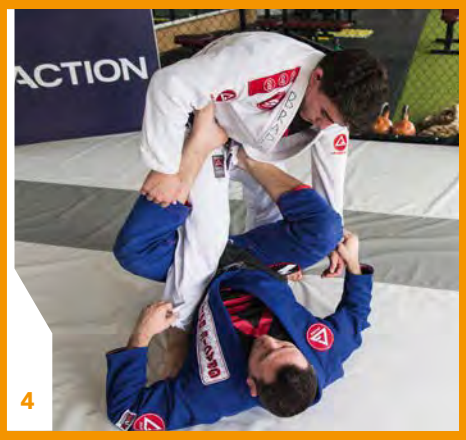
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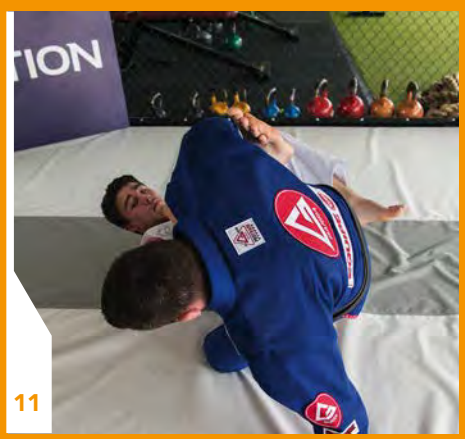
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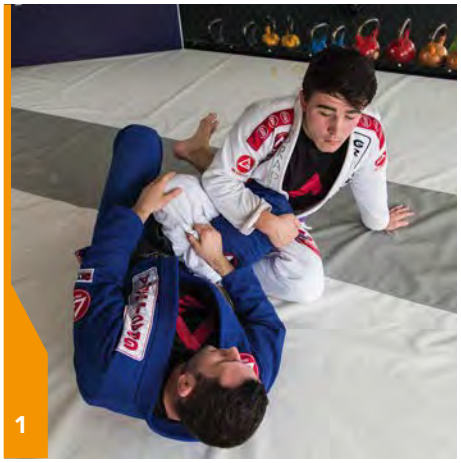

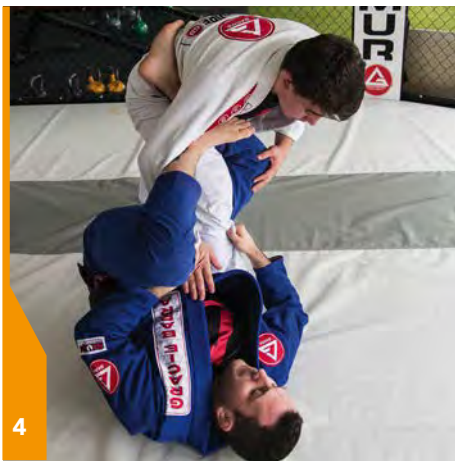

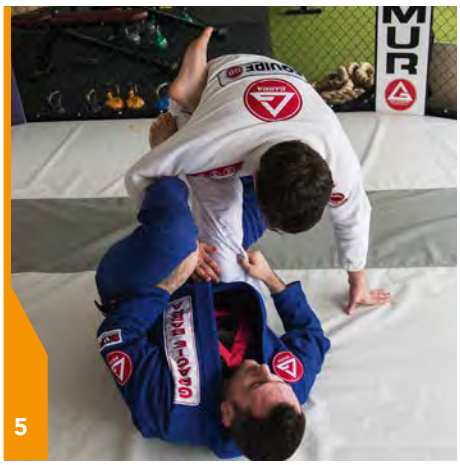

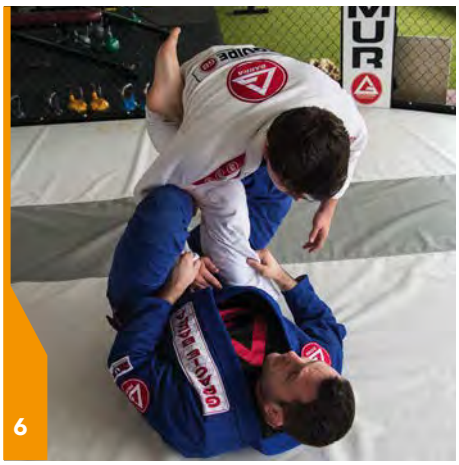

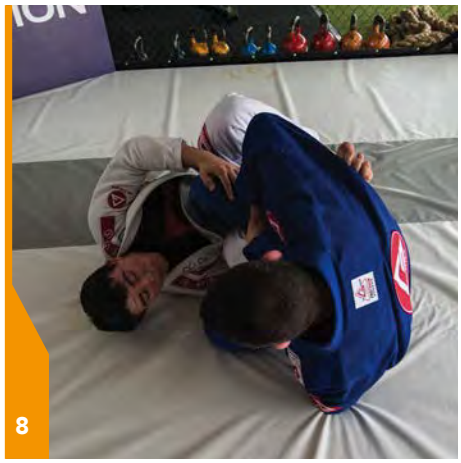

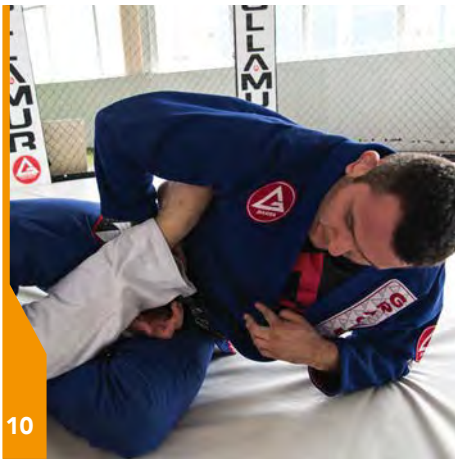

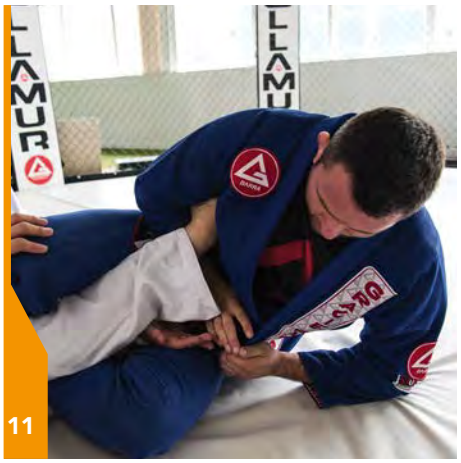

SWEEP TO FOOTLOCK

1: Starting from the 50/50 guard. **2:** Your opponent comes forward onto their knees, under-hooking your left leg. **3:** Gain a sleeve grip with your left hand and control your opponent's right leg with your right hand. **4/5:** Swing your left leg over your opponent's right arm to secure a lasso grip. **6/7/8:** Extend your legs and break your opponent's posture to their right. **9:** As your opponent hits the mat, you will often be able to attack with a footlock. **10/11:** Gain a tight grip on your opponent's foot, securing your left lapel with your right hand. **12:** Drive forwards to finish the submission.

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ASK THE DOCTOR

Braulio Estima is Jiu Jitsu Style's resident BJJ Doctor, helping prescribe our readers just the right tonic of tips to improve their grappling game.

Hi Braulio,
If you were going to start your BJJ career from the beginning, what would you have changed or done differently? I am very new to BJJ (extensive background in karate as a kid) and I was interested in any advice you'd have given a young version of yourself if you'd started again!

Many thanks - *Sonny*

Hi Sonny,
If I could go back in time, I'd probably have done a little bit more specific training, and also some more wrestling. I would tell anyone who is looking to transition into MMA to start wrestling as early as possible. I started training at 16, which at the time felt quite late to start jiu jitsu, but I think looking back it was the perfect time for me to start.

HELICOPTER ARMBAR

Hi Braulio,
Can you show your helicopter armlock? Saw it on a highlight video; looks sick :)

- Miguel

Hey Miguel,
Here it is – my helicopter armbar :)

1: Starting from de la Riva, you have control of your opponent's left collar and right sleeve. 2: Pull with your grips and bring your knees towards you to take your opponent's base away from them and bring their weight on top of you. 3: Extend your legs up to move your opponent into the air. 4/5/6: Maintain your grips with your arms, at the same time push harder with your left leg to spin your opponent off at an angle, opening up their arm for submission. 7/8: Sit back and finish the armlock.

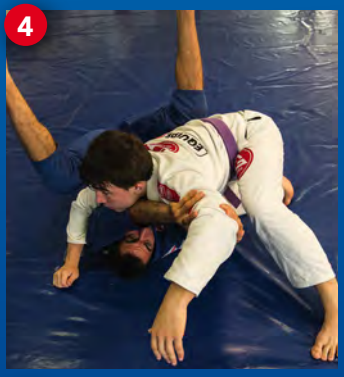
INVERTED TRIANGLE

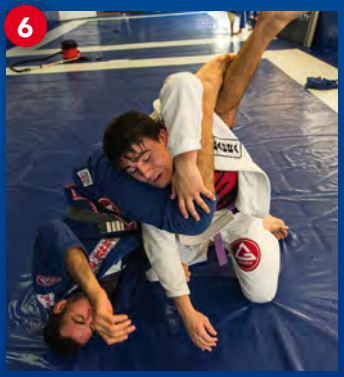
HI Braulio,
Did you see Liam McGeary's inverted triangle finish from side control in Bellator? It was amazing: can you break it down?

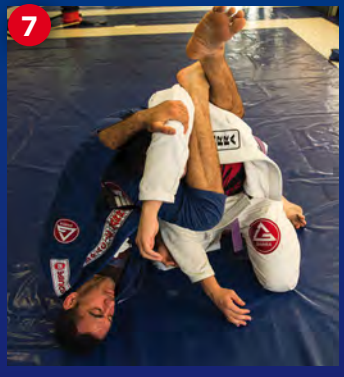
Thanks for your help - *Andrew*

Hey Andrew,
I saw it – what a great submission! Here is my breakdown.

1: So your opponent is on top of you in side control, but you have gained a grip on their left wrist, probably while they were trying to strike. 2/3: Bridge your hips forwards and extend your arms, pushing your opponent's weight a little to their left and opening up space for a triangle. 4/5/6: This may require a little flexibility, but throw your legs up over your head and bring your right leg underneath your opponent's left armpit. 7: From here, you can lock off a triangle. 8: Pull your opponent's left arm towards you to tighten and finish the triangle.







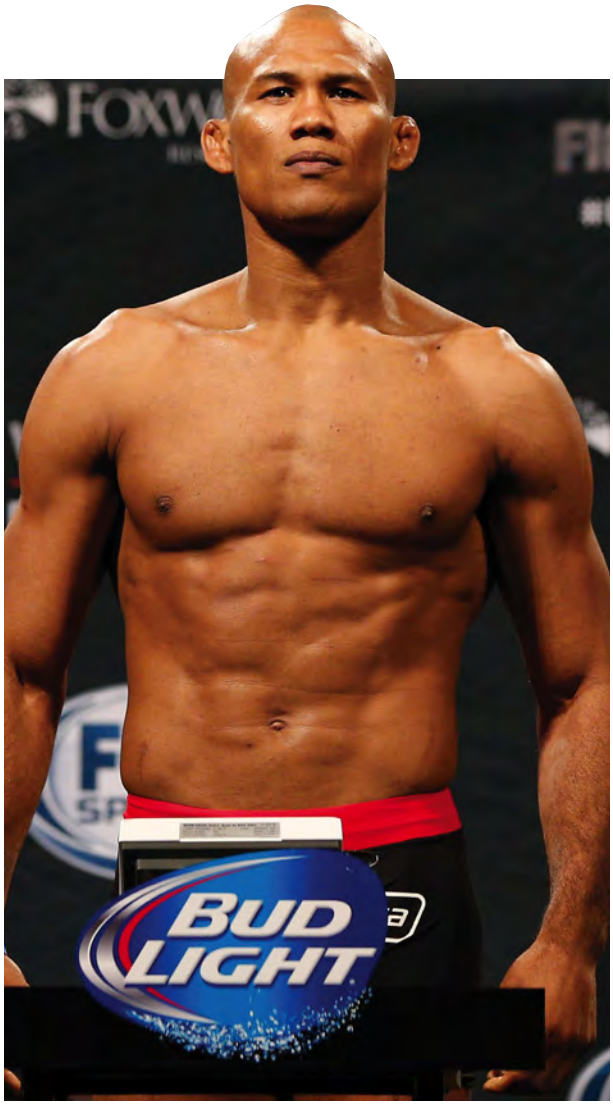
Dear Braulio,
It seems that more and more top BJJ fighters are looking to transition into MMA sooner rather than later, with the draw of more money an obvious attraction. Do you ever wish that you transferred to MMA sooner, and do you think it's important to start MMA training early if that's what you want to do? If you look at the differences in Jacare and Roger's careers, you could argue you need to start MMA early if you want to be a success. Interested to hear your thoughts!

- Jake

Hi Jake,
For me, the most important thing of all is to realise that you must have a very solid core, or base, within your martial arts training. For example, if you have achieved great things in Brazilian jiu jitsu, and you have accumulated many titles, most people will naturally start to think about other areas of competition that could be explored. Mixed martial arts are always the next test for a fighter.

It often boils down to what you want in life: do you want to be a UFC fighter and a champion? Do you want to do MMA just for the experience? Do you want to be a Brazilian jiu jitsu fighter? In my case, I think if I wanted to have gone further in MMA I should have started earlier. At first I only wanted to try MMA to test myself, mainly because at that period in time I didn't think there were many good BJJ representatives in MMA. It was a little challenge for me. Due to some injuries and personal issues I couldn't go any further in MMA, but it has never been my main focus of achievement.

If you want to be an MMA champion, I believe you still need to have a primary base in a martial art and to add more weapons once you have established what you are best at. But, if you want to become a complete MMA fighter, you should start to make the transition as soon as possible if you want to be one of the best, just like Jacare.



Hi Braulio,
I know some people may say they don't suffer with this, but do you ever suffer from being burned out and just wanting to stay away from the mats for a while? I teach here in the US, and as much as I love jiu jitsu and it has become a huge part of my life, I think I struggle to know when I should rest or train light. Do you have a certain formula you follow to stay fresh? Do you only train hard once a day? Do you give yourself a few days rest every now and then?

- Mark

Hi Mark,
Through my career I feel I have really learned to listen to my body. When I'm off-season it makes things much simpler, because I can take things a little easier during a session if I feel tired. Not to say I'd be out of shape, but I'm not pushing boundaries. When I'm getting ready for competition it becomes more like a job, so you have to put in your working hours and train as much as needed.

On average, I would say that if I'm in season I'll do one hard session per day. I will alternate it as well, so one day I'll train hard sparring in the morning, then do some drills later at night. The next day I will do some hard wrestling or judo in the afternoon, but only do some light drills in the morning.

I do some power weights work three times a week, but only enough so that I am still fresh for my jiu jitsu training. I don't want my strength sessions to take away my ability to push myself when training BJJ. If you train weights too hard then you will turn up for a jiu jitsu session and you won't be able to spar like you would in a competition.

When you develop your game in training, you have to push through boundaries, so you have to have enough energy so you can give it 100% when you can. I would re-emphasise that you must also listen to your body when you can. Even if I'm in season and I feel totally drained, I must rest. You hear people say they train six hours a day – I can't do that! I've never trained six hours a day.

Hi Braulio,
How do you approach live sparring at your gym? Do you start from the knees, standing, or from closed guard etc? Interesting to hear Josh Barnett say that starting on our knees is a waste of time, so wanted to see what you think.

Best - Pedro

Hi Pedro,
We tend to start our sparring on the ground, from the knees etc. That said, we also start sparring on the feet at times too, especially when we have people who want to go and compete. I don't think that starting from your knees is a waste of time because 90% of fights end up on the ground, so it's a natural thing to do. To become good at Brazilian jiu jitsu we train on the ground, and all the rules in competition dictate this too. For example, judo and jiu jitsu are the same, but the styles have developed in different ways because of the rules.

Starting on your knees is not a waste of time, and also I don't feel comfortable with beginners going crazy trying to take each other down and risking injury. Even if you don't know how to jump guard properly, you can get injured.

WRISTLOCK

Hi Braulio,
It probably sounds pretty basic to you, but I seriously struggle to move when someone just clamps down on my biceps in low posture in my closed guard. I know they are just stalling, but if you have any advice on how to get around this that would be great.

- Michelle

Hi Michelle
This is a pretty sneaky little submission that can work sometimes, so well worth a try!

1. Your opponent is stalling, with their thumbs pressed deep into your armpits and preventing you from attacking. If your opponent makes the mistake of putting their thumbs under your armpits, there is a very quick submission attack you can finish. 2: Pinch your biceps in against your opponent's forearms, effectively locking their limbs in place. 3: Move your left arm upwards so that your opponent's hand sits in the crook of your bicep and forearm. Remember, your opponent's thumb is trapped under your armpit as well - this keeps their hand locked in place when you attack the wristlock. 4: Continue to roll your left arm towards your right hand side, bringing your hand up towards your shoulder and moving slightly onto your right hip. This will apply great pressure on your opponent's wrist and allow you to finish with a tight submission.

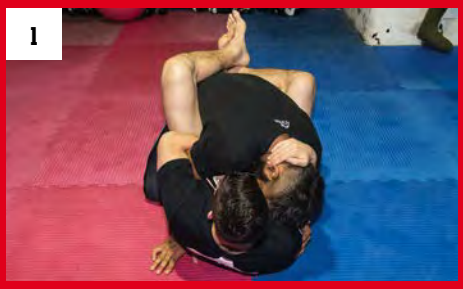
BJJ 4 MMA

JEREMY PETLEY

Jeremy Petley is a professional MMA competitor with a record of 10 wins (including 4 submissions) and 5 losses. Having made his pro debut in 2010, Petley is now fighting in the British Association of Mixed Martial Arts. In this instalment of BJJ 4 MMA, Jeremy showcases some of his favourite submissions and takedowns to be used inside the cage.

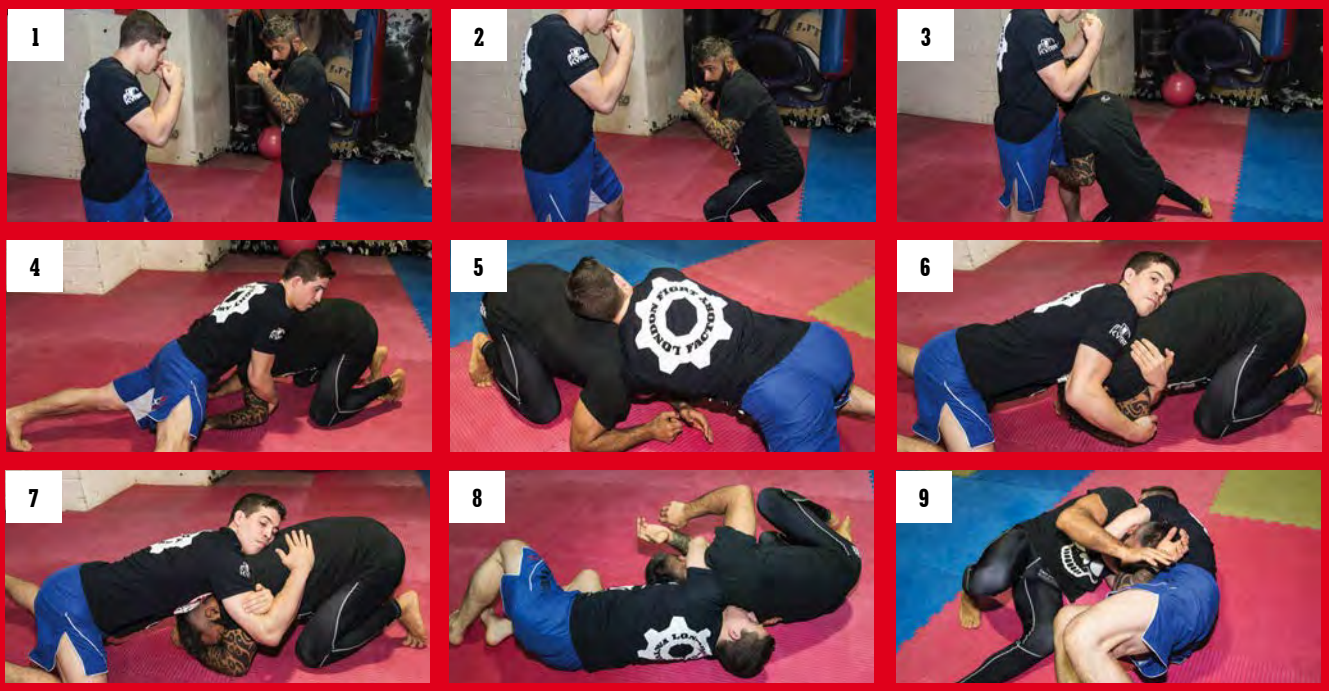
OMOPLATA TO FOOTLOCK

1: You start in closed guard with good control of your opponent's posture with your right hand, and an underhook on your opponent's right arm. **2/3:** Start to push your opponent's head away with your right hand and escape your hips to create space. **4/5:** Now you have created space you can attack with the omoplata. **6:** Sit up to start applying pressure to your opponent's shoulder. It is at this point that they will often attempt to roll and escape the submission. **7:** As your opponent starts to roll over their shoulder, control their right leg with your right arm. **8:** Secure a toehold grip and finish with a surprise submission.



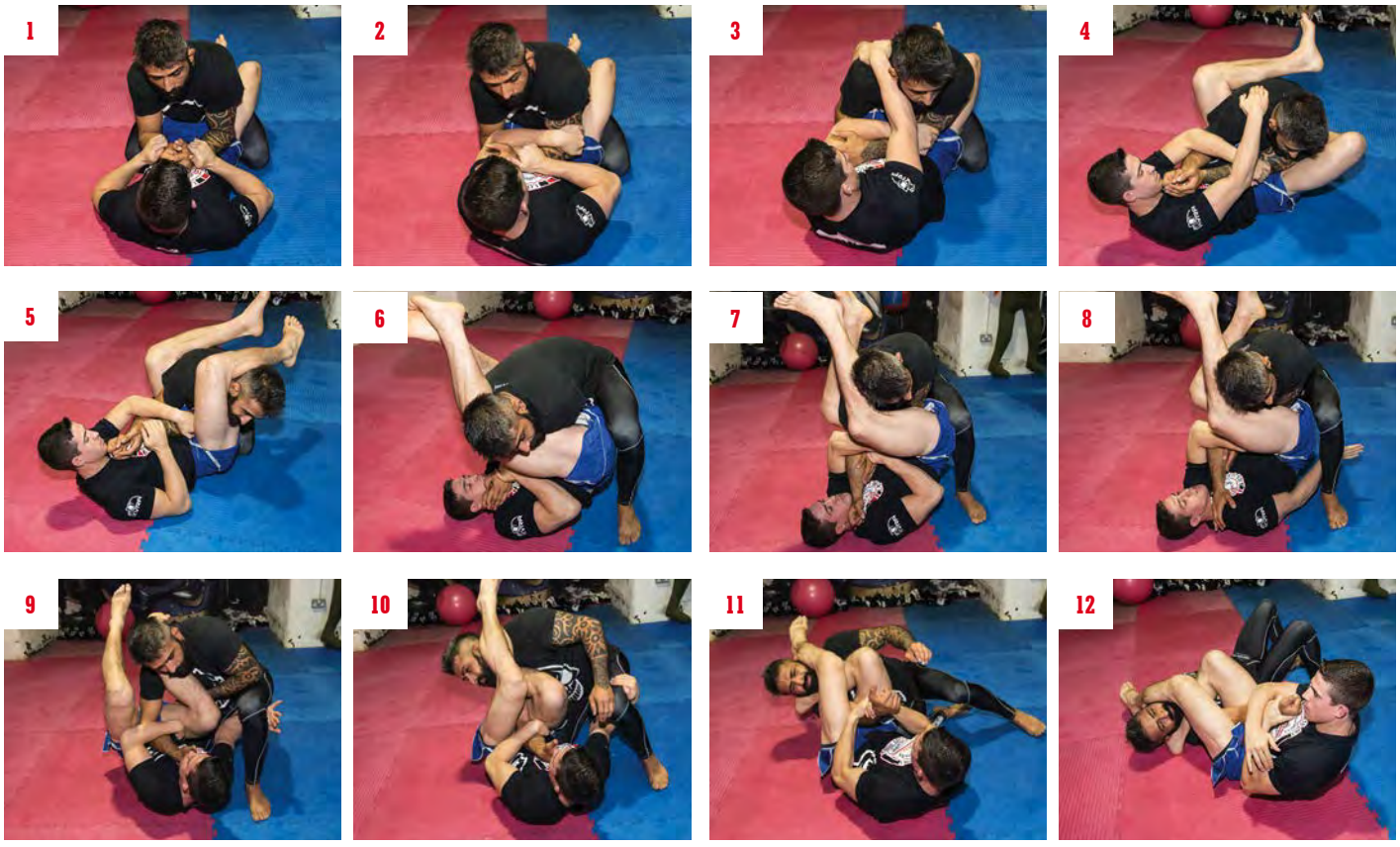
DARCE CHOKE FROM TAKEDOWN DEFENCE

1/2/3: Starting on your feet with your hands up ready to strike. Your opponent lowers their base and drives forward looking for a single leg takedown. **4:** As soon as your opponent attempts to close the distance, sprawl your hips backwards and defend the takedown, arriving on your knees on the mat. **5/6:** Once you've nullified the takedown, bring your left arm underneath your opponent's neck and swim it all the way through until you can gain a solid grip on their left armpit. **7:** Next, lock off your left hand on your right bicep. **8:** Fall to your right so that your shoulder touches the mat. **9:** Start to walk your legs towards your opponent's and squeeze your arms together to finish the submission.



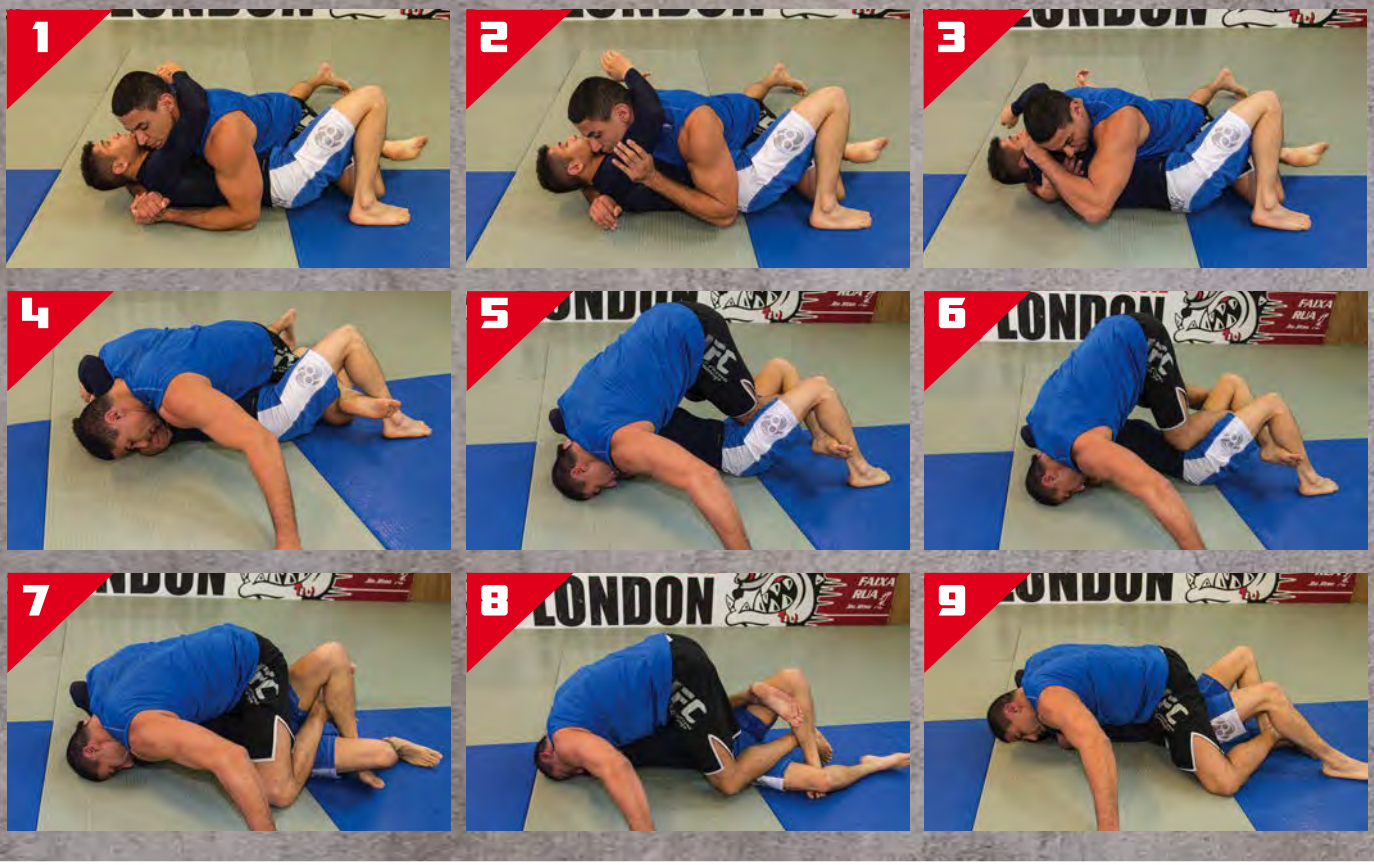
ARMLOCK COUNTER FROM GUARD

1: Starting from closed guard, gain control of both of your opponent's wrists to prevent them from landing strikes. **2:** Switch your left hand to your opponent's left elbow and start to isolate their arm. **3:** Break your opponent's posture with your right hand on their right shoulder. **4:** Adjust your hips and bring your left calf down across your opponent's back. **5:** You are now in the classic armlock position from closed guard. **6/7:** Often your opponent will defend the armlock by stacking all their weight on top of you. **8:** As your opponent stacks their weight on top of you, bring your right arm under their left leg. **9:** At this stage, you can abandon your attack on your opponent's left arm, but switch to attack their right one. Switch your hips back to the left and maintain control of your opponent's right arm with your left arm. **10:** Bring your left leg over your opponent's face to secure the submission. **11/12:** Extend your legs to drop your opponent to the floor and finish the armlock.



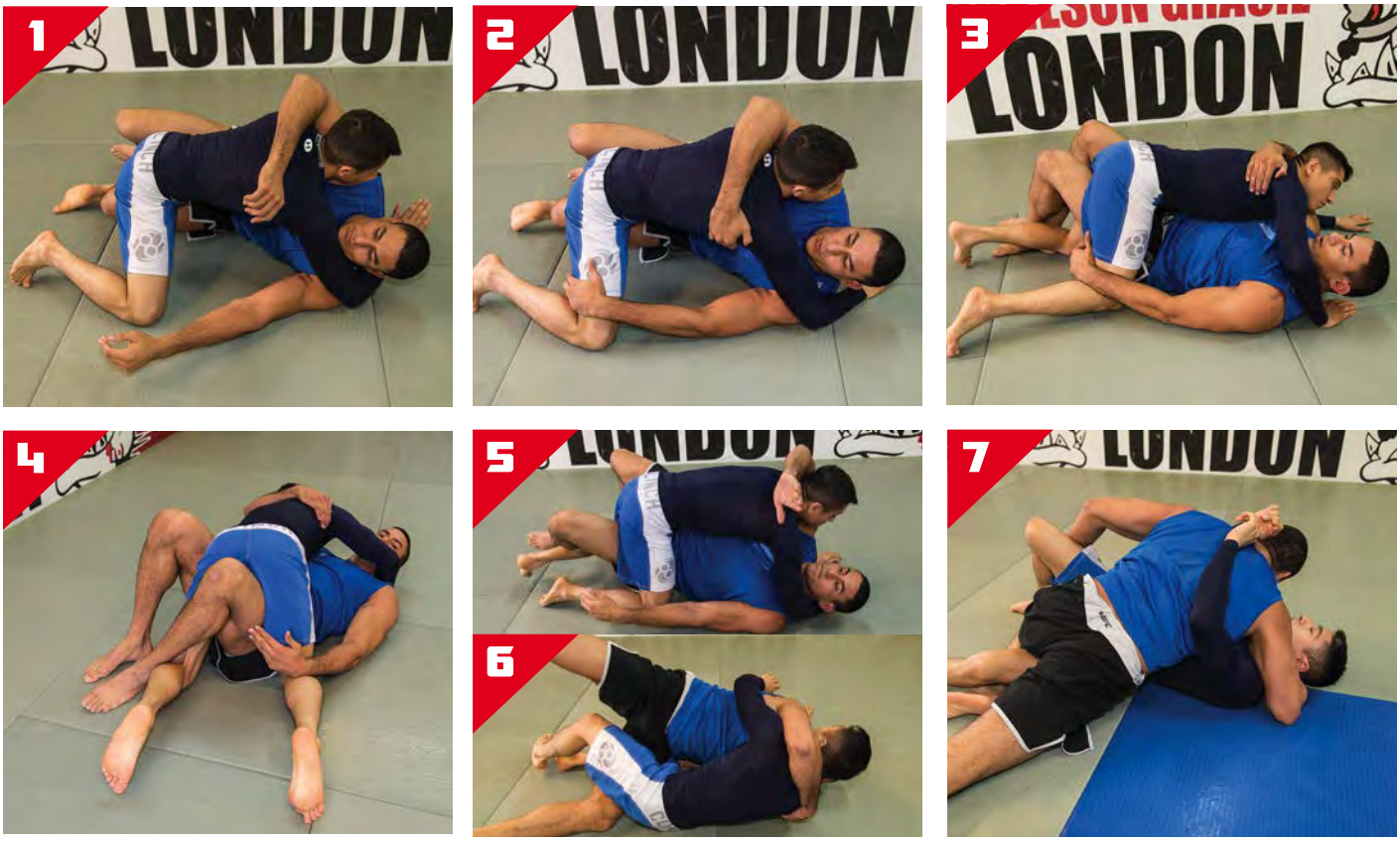
HALF GUARD TO MOUNT

1: You have established half guard and have solid over/under control of your opponent's upper body. **2/3:** Start to push on your opponent's left triceps, pushing their arm over your head. **4:** Once you have driven your head close to your opponent's armpit, you are now in a great position to pass to mount. However, many people connect their hands together and run the risk of being reversed by a stronger opponent. I like to post out with my left hand to maintain a solid base. **5/6:** Come up onto your toes to free your knee from your opponent's half guard, all the time making sure you maintain pressure on their upper body. **7:** Drop your hips down on top of your opponent. From here, you are in a great position, so take your time and don't rush. **8/9:** When you're ready, bring your right foot on top of your opponent's left thigh to help progress through to mount.



SWEEP

1: You are stuck on the bottom in half guard and your opponent has established head control with their right hand. **2:** From here, people will often try a bump sweep, but your opponent can base out quite easily with their right foot from here. So, you have to set up the sweep with a small adjustment. **3:** Hug your opponent's right leg, at the same time roll to your left. **4:** By rolling slightly flat, you can bring your opponent's right leg close to your hip, making the sweep a more reliable option. **5/6:** In a powerful motion, bridge off your right foot, making sure to block your opponent's right leg with your left arm and moving their head with your right arm. **7:** Arrive on top in half guard ready to pass.



SHEDDING THE GI

WILSON JUNIOR

Shedding the Gi inside the latest issue of JJS is Carlson Gracie UK head coach and founder, Wilson Junior! Wilson is a third degree black belt under Nelson Solari, as well as holding a black belt in luta livre.

Here, Wilson showcases some of his favourite luta livre techniques, including chokes, sweeps and cervical locks.

CERVICAL LOCK 1

1/2: Starting from the mount position, start to isolate your opponent's right arm by pushing on their elbow and moving the arm up towards their head. **3:** Once you've managed to move your opponent's arm up next to their head, grip their bicep with your right hand. This is a very uncomfortable spot for your opponent and you can set up a cervical lock. **4:** Move your left hand to the tip of your opponent's elbow. **5:** Maintain control of your opponent's right elbow; at the same time lift your right forearm off the mat, twisting your shoulder towards your left. This will apply great pressure on your opponent's neck.

BEAR HUG

1: Starting from the mount position, with dominant control of your opponent's left arm against their head. **2:** Grab your own left bicep with your right hand. **WRONG:** From here, people will often attempt to finish the submission by placing their left hand against their own head and squeezing. In my eyes, this is inefficient and is wasting the power in your left arm. **3:** Instead of placing your left hand on your head, reach around and grab your right elbow. **4:** Drop your hips down on your opponent, so there is no weight going through your knees at all. Squeeze your arms together for a very tight choke.

AMERICANA COUNTER

1: Often when you reach mount and isolate one of your opponent's arms as pictured, they will place their hand behind their head in an attempt to prevent the inevitable choke attack. Don't worry – there's a counter! **2:** Grab your opponent's wrist with your left hand. **3:** Make sure you twist your opponent's wrist 45 degrees; this will help the submission come on much quicker. **4:** Maintaining all your grips and tight head pressure; start to drag your opponent's knuckles to their left and apply the Americana.

CERVICAL LOCK 2

1: You are in the mount position and have isolated your opponent's right arm, securing it with your right hand underneath their head. **2:** Drive your weight forwards. **3/4:** Transition to knee-on-belly, then move into side control, all the time maintaining your grips. **5:** Switch your base to keza katame. At the same time, move your right elbow from your opponent's neck to the top of their head; this will create the greatest pressure when applying the cervical lock. **6:** Start to straighten your right arm and pull your opponent's head with your left hand to finish the submission.

TECHNIQUE

KNEE ON BELLY WITH NICK BROOKS

CHOKE ONE

1: You are on top in side control. Grip your opponent's collar with your left hand. Your grip should reach all the way to the other side of their neck so your forearm is right behind their head. At the same time, slide your elbow back across their belt line and control their trousers, keeping your elbow low to block both their legs. **2:** Lift your opponent's shoulders and hips off the floor and drive your knee downwards by pushing your hips forward and posturing up. **3:** Release the grip on your opponent's hips and slide your hand into their collar on the near side (palm facing up). **4:** Loop your arm around your opponent's neck to set up the choke. **5:** Finally, sprawl on top of your arms to apply your body weight to the choke.

TRIANGLE CHOKE

1: You are on top in side control. Grip your opponent's collar with your left hand. Your grip should reach all the way to the other side of their neck so your forearm is right behind their head. At the same time, slide your elbow back across their belt line and control their trousers, keeping your elbow low to block both their legs. **2:** Often your opponent attempts to defend with their right hand on your knee. Control their defending arm at the sleeve and slide your right knee across their chest. **3:** Continue moving your right knee towards the mat and hook your left leg behind your opponent's head. **4:** Roll to your left. Pull your opponent's head towards you to maintain tight control. **5:** Lock off the triangle and finish the submission.

HAVING TRAINED EXTENSIVELY WITH MAURICIO GOMES, WHO WAS A KNEE ON BELLY SPECIALIST, I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE THE POSITION AS A VERY USEFUL WAY TO SET UP HIGH PERCENTAGE SUBMISSIONS. SOME OF THE FINISHES BELOW YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE SEEN BEFORE, BUT HOPEFULLY A FEW OF THEM ARE NEW TO YOU TOO!

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CHOKE TWO

1: You are on top in side control. Grip your opponent's collar with your left hand Your grip should reach all the way to the other side of their neck so your forearm is right behind their head. At the same time, slide your elbow back across their belt line and control their trousers, keeping your elbow low to block both their legs. **2:** Release the grip on your opponent's hips and slide your hand into their collar on the far side (palm facing up). **3/4:** Spin 180 degrees, placing your head on the floor next to your opponent's hip, (to stop him turning). Sprawl over your arms to apply your weight to the choke.

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CHOKE THREE

1: Starting on top in side control, control your opponent's collar with a deep grip using your left hand. Your grip should reach all the way to the other side of their neck, so your forearm is right behind their head. **2:** Lift your opponent's shoulders and hips off the floor and drive your knee downwards, pushing your hips forward and posturing up. **3:** Release the grip on your opponent's hips and slide your hand into their collar on the near side (palm facing up). **4:** Control your opponents left elbow with your left hand. **5:** Pull your opponent's elbow towards you and sprawl on top of their shoulder, trapping their arm underneath your body. **6:** Squeeze tight with your arms to complete the choke.

ARMLOCK

1: Starting on top in side control, control your opponent's collar with a deep grip using your left hand. Your grip should reach all the way to the other side of their neck, so your forearm is right behind their head. **2:** Slide your right elbow back across your opponent's belt line and control the trousers on their right hip, keeping your elbow low to block their legs. **3:** Lift your opponent's shoulders and hips off the floor and drive your knee downwards by pushing your hips forward and posturing up. They will generally place their hand on your knee to relieve the pressure. **4:** Underhook your opponent's elbow with your right hand. **5:** Turn and sit on your opponent's head while controlling their elbow tight to your chest. Next, control their knee with your left hand. **6:** Turn your body, sliding your knee across your opponent's chest as close to their armpit as possible. **7:** Sit tight to their shoulder and squeeze your knees together. Extend your opponent's arm, keeping the control of their knee so he does not turn out of the submission.

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FEMALE REPRESENTATION

HANNAH GORMAN

The line-up for Metamoris 5 has been released. The main contest is arguably the most exciting the event has managed to put together; Renzo Gracie vs. Kazushi Sakuraba. However, the rest of the card has left a few feeling disappointed. In the 6 fight line up, there is not a single female match-up, again. There hasn't been one since Metamoris 2, when an epic battle between Michelle Nicolini and Mackenzie Dern ended in a draw, but was hailed as one of Metamoris 2's most technical and exciting match-ups by many. So, what happened? Why hasn't there been a single female match-up since?

Before I go any further, I am not the only one wondering why. Michelle Nicolini has very recently expressed her frustration in a Facebook status post, where she states that she will not support the IBJJF Jiu Jitsu Expo due to their upcoming event lacking any female super-fights or seminars. She ends her status with, 'Ladies, please help promote and share to have the same opportunities'. I asked her what she thought needed to happen with regard to women's exposure in Jiu Jitsu competitions.

"GIRLS NEED TO BE INSPIRED AND MOTIVATED BY OTHER GIRLS. WE NEED TO MAKE BJJ GROW NOT ONLY IN THE NUMBER OF MALES BUT IN THE NUMBER OF FEMALES TOO!" - MICHELLE NICOLINI

'The biggest tournaments are inviting big male names, which we love and will always support. But, at the same time they are making the sport grow one sided (male dominated). If the female side keeps getting forgotten about, we are never going to be watched! We don't get the same amount of money in tournaments that offer money for the winners, and we don't get the same sort of exposure in magazines. I feel like I am doing what I can, travelling the world, sharing my knowledge and competing as much as I can. Girls need to be inspired and motivated by other girls. We need to make BJJ grow not only in the number of males but in the number of females too!'

A short visit to Metamoris.com and a click on the athletes' tab reveals that the number of guys that have featured on previous Metamoris cards outnumbers women 32 to 2. That's one female match-up compared to 16 male. Now, I'm not saying that in order for things to be considered equal,there needs to be a 50:50 split in women to men fights on a card. I know that considerably more men train than women at the moment, so in terms of numbers, there are significantly more high level guys around than high level girls. However, the argument that there are not enough high level women to justify a single women's match-up on a 5 or 6 fight card, is simply not true. That's what many women are becoming frequently frustrated with; promoters from organisations acting as if top level women do not exist, when they do!

The importance of strong and positive female role models is paramount in the jiu jitsu community. You only need to see the scale of some of the kids' divisions now to see that the sport is growing rapidly. The young boys who train have a torrent of male jiu jitsu competitors to look up to. With such a lack of women being represented in events such as Metamoris and the IBJJF Jiu Jitsu Expo, our male counterparts are receiving a higher level of exposure in comparison to female athletes. If you are part of a jiu jitsu family, and you sit down to watch the upcoming Metamoris 5 live stream, who does your daughter or wife who trains have to look up to? No female athletes are featured on the pre-fight hype videos or photo shoots that circulate around Facebook, twitter and Instagram. How can someone aspire to be a world champion if they are not inspired by watching the current world champions at these kinds of popular events?

At the end of Metamoris 4, and after a load of comments from different people on Ralek Gracie's Instagram asking why there were no female match-ups, he asked me to e-mail him some suggestions of female competitors who deserve a chance of being on a future card. He stated, and I quote: 'There is such a limited number of high level women to pull from you could almost count them on one hand. Please e-mail me a list of women you have in mind'.

I decided to take him up on his offer. I posed the question to all the BJJ lovers I knew, via my SHEBEASTBJJ Facebook page, and on the BJJ Reddit forum, and I got close to 100 replies, most of which came from men. Not much of a surprise, as previously mentioned we all know there are more men that train than women. I found comfort in the fact that the majority of the guys that replied shared our frustrations. There are enough females to create a single match-up. In fact, a lot of responses listed 3 or 4 dream match-ups which featured a range of names from highly decorated brown and black belt world champions, to veteran MMA fighters.

Count them all on one hand? Perhaps, but you'd have to go back a few years. There is a new generation of female competitors who have proved through competition that they deserve a chance of featuring at these events.

Do Metamoris and the IBJJF want to help promote the growth of women's jiu jitsu? Denying current high level female competitors the opportunity to compete and gain exposure in these events may well be inhibiting the sport's growth amongst females and young girls, due to lack of exposure and role models. The last line of Ralek's comment to me stated that they do intend to feature women on future events as 'the industry grows'. The addition of rooster and super heavy weight female divisions in IBJJF events indicates the demand is there as the number of female competitors is growing.

There will be more women black belts in 20 years time than in 2 years time, but how long will event organisers wait before they commit and show they really do support and promote the growth of women's jiu jitsu as much as the men's?

We will have to wait and see.

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TEAM BUILDING

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR A COHESIVE BJJ TEAM

Brazilian jiu jitsu may be an individual sport but it's a challenge to make any progress without support from our team mates and instructors. Group cohesion – that is, the way a group sticks together and works towards a common goal – is important to help us all achieve our aims in BJJ and enjoy ourselves in the process.

While some teams might work well together naturally, group cohesion is something that can be intentionally developed. Some of these team building principles may seem obvious at first but my sport psychology experiences suggest that we can all benefit by applying these concepts more consistently.

Just because people train regularly together, it doesn't automatically mean that the group functions well. Like any relationship, long-lasting team cohesion takes work. Thankfully, there are five principles that we can use to help teams become more cohesive: Proximity, Similarity, Fairness, Distinctiveness and Social Support.

PROXIMITY

Unsurprisingly, group commitment tends to be higher when team mates spend more time in physical proximity to one another. This principle is quite easily satisfied in BJJ since it's difficult to practise it without sharing your training partner's personal space! This provides an in-built mechanism for supporting proximity but there is also value in finding other ways for academy members to interact. Beyond working together on the mats to improve our jiu jitsu, we are social creatures who have a psychological need for meaningful human relationships.

In addition to weekly training sessions, other opportunities for proximity include travelling together as a team and staying at the same place for competitions, gathering together for seminars or training camps, and organising social events outside the academy. Recognise that club members join for a number of reasons. Some are more focused on the task, some more on the social aspects of the BJJ lifestyle. It is important to provide different ways for the team to engage with one another.

SIMILARITY

We are more likely to feel part of a team when we have more in common with our team mates. One of the great things about BJJ is that it attracts a wide cross-section of individuals, people of different ages, genders, backgrounds, attitudes, shapes and sizes. The key here is to highlight similarities rather than differences.

Instructors and unofficial leaders such as long-standing members have a role to play in establishing a sense of togetherness through a team identity with shared purpose and values. This is where spending time with one another also helps. It gives team mates a chance to develop shared experiences. And, while the idea of team uniforms is hotly debated in online BJJ communities, it can be an effective way to encourage cohesion among the group. Establishing team traditions can also promote a sense of similarity.

FAIRNESS

Careful use of feedback, rewards and punishment can help to create a positive team climate. Expectations for the group should be clear, and applied fairly and consistently among members. Instructors and team mates can influence this to create a sense of social equality. While good performances should be acknowledged, it is important for instructors give attention to all students rather than just focusing on the star competitors (and letting them get away with behaviours that would be unacceptable if engaged in by others). People want to feel that they are a valued member of the team.

Perhaps, counter-intuitively, the team may also feel more cohesive if they experience an injustice. A bad decision from a referee can provide a topic for team mates to commiserate and bond over. In some respects, instructors use this principle when they make a post-promotion whipping or gruelling competition session compulsory. Everybody gets to grumble about the shared – if painful – experience. These techniques must be used with care, however. While such strategies can build a cohesive group, they place the instructor outside that team unit and potentially undermine students' trust in him or her.

DISTINCTIVENESS

This is perhaps the principle where teams get to have the most fun. This is about creating and highlighting characteristics that mark your team out as different from others. Never have I felt more team commitment than when gathered with scores of red-shirted team mates chanting 'Uh-a Gracie Barra' on finals day at the World Championships. I'm sure the group in black on the other side of the Pyramid were equally as proud to wear their eagle emblem and sing 'Alliance eu sou…' Some strategies in this category enhance similarity as well as distinctiveness. Examples include team emblems, clothing, songs, traditions and even tattoos.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

A solid team is built on a foundation of mutual support and respect. This is about helping team mates, listening to one another and communicating effectively. Again, the instructors and senior students are key role models here in encouraging pro-social behaviour which benefits the group. A genuine social network is one where the members care about one another. One way to offer social support is contacting an injured team mate to find out how they are and to include them in the social interactions of the team.

Team building: Multi-dimensional and Dynamic

BJJ is an interactive endeavour. We rely heavily on our training partners. Because of this, the whole of a team is greater than the sum of its parts. In this article, we've only touched on a handful of ideas for team building. Group cohesion is a multi-dimensional concept; it involves numerous aspects which must be balanced. It's also dynamic. Team building strategies need to be adapted over time to meet the varying needs of the team and its members.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that team cohesion becomes harder to maintain as group size increases. The challenges facing a small-ish team like ATOS are quite different from those facing a bigger team like Gracie Humaita, and it's interesting to note how the different teams have gone about this.

So what about your team? What do you do well already? And what could you improve?

Dr Rebecca Hill is a Sport and Exercise Psychologist chartered by the British Psychological Society, and an Education Adviser at the University of Exeter.

She is a brown belt competitor under Professor Victor Estima and is a current European champion. Rebecca blogs about sport psychology and BJJ at www.rebeccalhill.com.

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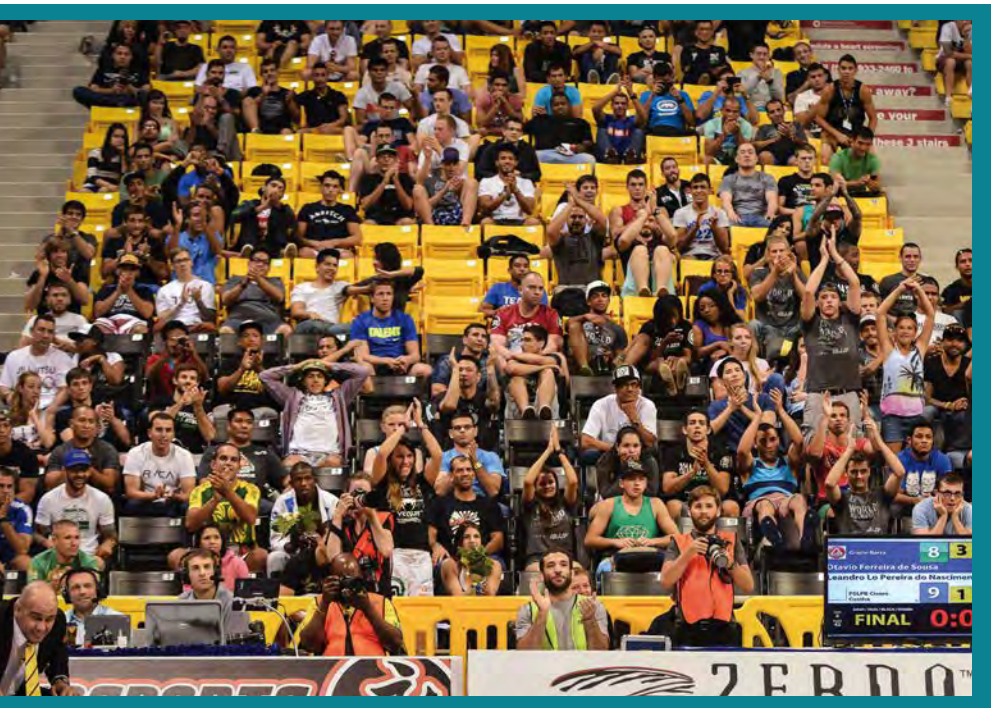
STEROID ABUSE IN BJJ



Now before you start warming up your fingers for hate mail, take a second to read through this article before you vomit insults into an email that I won't read. I am not anti or pro steroid use. I have worked with athletes who have used and those who haven't. I've worked with athletes across a vast array of sports, many of whom were tested for drugs. I am not a drugs coach or a doctor, although I am lucky enough to have colleagues who are. The views I express here are my own and are a reflection of what I see happening.

Steroids are in our beloved sport because our sport is getting bigger. As BJJ is getting more and more popular, more people are entering competitions. As more people are entering, competitions are becoming more and more competitive, especially at the higher level.

This means that part time and full time BJJ athletes are having to work harder to win big competitions, gain prize money and earn a living (yes, if you want to do BJJ full time you're going to have to find a way to earn at least enough money to live; your parents will not support you forever). Fighters are spending more and more time perfecting every aspect of their game from strength and conditioning to nutrition, flexibility and mobility. I can tell you first hand that the most dedicated athletes are taking care of every factor, every day, whether they have a competition coming up or not. This is how you become world class. This is how you separate yourself from the pack and make a name for yourself.

"AS THE SPORT OF BJJ GROWS AND CHANGES, THE PROBLEMS WITHIN IT ARE GOING TO MATCH OTHER SPORTS THAT CAME BEFORE US"

The athletes who are looking to become the best in the world want to leave no stone unturned when it comes to gaining even a 1% advantage over the competition. Most people can't even fathom the lengths that world class athletes go through to make sure that they have even the slightest edge over their rivals. The top BJJ players are spending every minute of every day thinking how to be stronger, faster, more flexible and more technical in order to destroy their rivals.

This is where steroids come in.

Whether you agree with them morally or not, no one can deny that steroids allow you to train harder, recover faster and allow you to make quicker gains in muscle mass and strength. That's a fact. However, the other fact is that the IBJJF and other fighting organisations have deemed steroids too much of an advantage to be allowed in fair competition (it's not just a matter of legality either as steroids are perfectly legal in many countries). The IBJJF have gotten tighter in their policing of banned substances recently and brought in the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) to help regulate them. The IBJJF now uses the USADA list of banned substances (also called the WADA prohibited list) for all substances that athletes are forbidden to take while competing and in the off season. Some of the better known ones are as follows:

TESTOSTERONE

Test-CHP (or any form of testosterone) will bind to the A.R on fat cells, resulting in fat break-down and also preventing new fat formation. Testosterone CHP will also promote nitrogen retention in the muscles, which is good, as the more nitrogen the muscles holds the more protein they store and the bigger the muscles get. Testosterone has the ability to increase red blood cell production and a higher RBC count may improve endurance by providing more highly oxygenated blood to working muscles. More RBCs can also improve your recovery from strenuous physical activity, and have a "volumising" effect on your muscles.

WINSTROL

Winstrol - Stanozolol is a very commonly used anabolic steroid for cutting cycles (losing weight and/or fat).

DIANABOL

Helps increase testosterone production up to 40% depending on dosage (helps add muscle, see testosterone).

DECA

Produces less testosterone than Dianabol (up to 20%) and doesn´t produce many estrogenic or androgenic side effects (thus its popularity).

HGH (HUMAN GROWTH HORMONE)

Human growth hormone (HGH) is produced in the body by the pituitary gland. Once it is released, HGH is a protein that stimulates the body cells to increase in size as well as to undergo more rapid cell division than usual. In addition, it enhances the movement of amino acids through cell membranes and also increases the rate at which these cells convert these molecules into proteins. Clearly, you can see that this would amount to an anabolic (muscle building) effect in the human body.

The ways in which the IBJJF tests its athletes is changing all the time to try to find the best ways to ensure that testing is fair and accurate (more on this later). Currently the IBJJF takes 10 athletes at random out of the medal winners and tests them for the substances on the banned list. If they fail for any of the substances they will have their medal and prize money removed and may face a ban from future events. If an athlete does test positive for a banned substance they are given the option of an appeal (more on this in a bit).

This all sounds pretty fair and a good deterrent to athletes looking to make their career in BJJ, right? A world class competitor wouldn't jeopardise their future career just to win a BJJ tournament would they?

Well let's have a closer look at what a world class BJJ competitor can make from being successful.

- Prize money for IBJJF first place in November in Rio - $4,000 ($1,000 for second).
- Prize money for first place in the NY BJJ Pro - $4,000 ($1,000 for second).
- AD World Pro (yearly): Absolute – $30,000 for first / $3,000 for second / $1,500 for thirds. Weight groups – $8,000 for first / $3,000 for second / $1,500 for thirds for black belts and smaller prizes + travel and accommodation for lower belts.
- Metamoris: $100,000 of prize money divided by 14 fighters.
- Copa Podio: Undisclosed amount in cash prizes, estimated to be around $10,000 for the winner.

LET'S GET SOMETHING OUT OF THE WAY. THOUGH WE ALL WISH IT WASN'T TRUE, STEROIDS ARE IN BJJ. THEY ARE AT THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST LEVELS OF THE SPORT AND THEY ARE HERE TO STAY.

• Grapplers Quest: Around $3,000 for first place ($1,000 for second).

• ADCC (every two years): per weight class - $10,000 for first, $5,000 for second, $3,000 for third, $1,000 for fourth. Absolute: $40,000 for first, $10,000 for second, $5,000 for third, $1,000 for fourth. Super Fight winner: $40,000, loser : $10,000.

The allure of steroids for athletes comes when the desire to win surpasses playing by the rules.

Whether we like it or not, BJJ athletes do not get paid that much money compared to other sports. Not to mention the insane amount of time it takes to get to a level where you can even earn a good amount (8-10 years to black belt on average). It is therefore no surprise that many athletes would do anything it takes to get to the upper levels to even have a chance of competing for this amount of cash.

Also look at the actual likelihood that those who are using will get caught. Firstly you have to be one of the 10 people chosen and then you have to test positive for one of the banned substances. Herein lies the problem of why this is an ineffective way to find those on performance enhancing drugs (PEDs). Just testing people isn't a guaranteed method to find those using. Just look at the case of Lance Armstrong. He was the most tested athlete of all time however he was on just about every drug imaginable to try and get the edge.

Say I was to give you a test on your 6 times table in a year's time. I tell you what the test is going to be on and the exact date in which you will be taking it. Now say I'll give you $10,000 to pass the test. Chances are you're going to be prepared. It's no different when testing for performance enhancing drugs.

So how are the athletes getting around the tests?

Well for a start the actual drug trade is far more advanced than those testing for drugs. The fact is that there is more money in selling the drugs than there is testing for them. More money equals more research, even if it is illegal. As soon as one substance is banned another is found to take its place. As this substance is unknown to the testers, it simply isn't tested for.

Certain drugs leave your system at certain times while other drugs are only detectable with certain tests. If an athlete (or a coach) has this knowledge they can easily plan what they use, and when, so that they sail through a drug test. There are also ways that athletes can mask the results of a test by using blockers and masking agents. This is, of course, against the rules and punished just as harshly as actually taking performance enhancing drugs.

Even if an athlete is picked and tests positive for a banned substance, they are given the opportunity for an appeal. It has been well documented in other sports that organisations will look the other way or allow an athlete to find a reason for a positive test (the most common is a steroid cream of some sort where the athlete didn't know what they were taking). This happens more frequently than you know in other sports, especially if the athlete is popular and a big draw to the sport or event.

We must remember that the athletes who have made the decision to take PEDs have already made the decision to cheat. With this decision also goes the decision to try to cover up that cheat with further cheating. Athletes will go to all kinds of lengths to cover it up. I've heard of athletes skipping the country, faking family deaths and even making up false illnesses in order to get prescriptions for things on the banned list (thankfully no-one I've worked with).

So what is the solution? What can be done to ensure that the rules are met and people cannot find a way around the tests?

The only way to truly test athletes for PEDs is to visit each athlete a number of times over the course of the year at random. Then take blood, urine and hair samples, run a full panel of tests for everything that is on the banned list. This method is far from perfect and there are ways around this too. However the main reason that this will not take place is simply financial. It costs between $150 - $1500 per test, per athlete, to be comprehensive. This is a LOT of money for the IBJJF to be forking out for every competitor who is even ranked in the top 10, never mind every athlete that enters an IBJJF competition!

The fact remains that steroids and PEDs are here and here to stay in BJJ. Just like in every other sport that has money on the line for those competing, there will always be cheats.

So what does that mean for you and me? What does it mean for those who practice BJJ for the love of the art and like to do the odd competition or two?

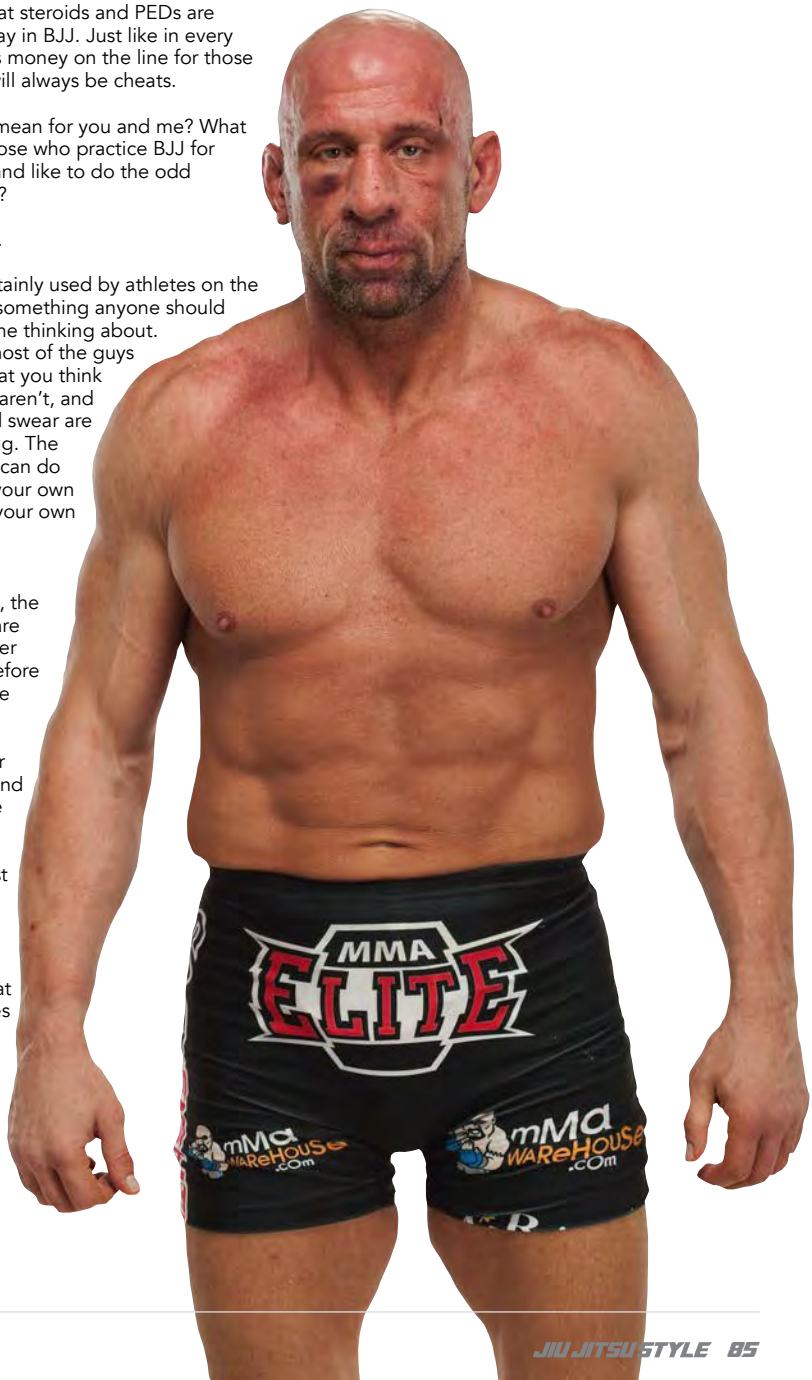
Well, nothing really.

While PEDs are certainly used by athletes on the local scene it's not something anyone should spend too much time thinking about. In my experience most of the guys in MMA and BJJ that you think are using probably aren't, and the ones you would swear are clean might be using. The only thing that you can do is to work hard on your own training and enjoy your own journey.

As the sport of BJJ grows and changes, the problems within it are going to match other sports that came before us. We can either be adult about it and accept that this will happen, or bury our heads in the sand and pretend that we are somehow different from everyone else (we aren't). The best thing we can do is to try and address the problems we face in the most efficient manner that protects the athletes and helps our public perception.

Stay healthy,

Mike



FIT 2 FIGHT

HOW TO BE A SQUAT MONSTER

WITH ANDY MARSHALL

IF YOU WANT TO BE STRONG YOU HAVE TO SQUAT. FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF YOUR TRAINING YOU SHOULD SQUAT, SQUAT AND SQUAT SOME MORE. A GOOD GOAL IS TO SQUAT DOUBLE YOUR BODY WEIGHT. I'M TALKING ABOUT REAL, FULL SQUATS - AT LEAST TO PARALLEL.

Before we get into technique I have to tell that the one thing I recommend to 99% of people out there is a good pair of high quality squat shoes. These will make a TREMENDOUS difference to your form and keep you safer. Guys usually benefit more from these than females do, but anyone can usually eliminate a couple of issues instantly with a pair of these.

On with the squatting lesson...

THE SET UP

Grab the bar with an even grip, wider than shoulder width and be sure to squeeze it as hard as you can. You should be making white knuckled fists and the tension should radiate from your forearms to your upper arms and all across your back. Everything must be drum tight.

Duck under the bar and jam your shoulder blades as far back as you can. This should be uncomfortable.

The bar should sit on or just under your traps, not the top of your spine or your neck. By keeping your hands in a little closer you can create a bigger shelf for the bar to sit on. By closer, I mean 6-10 inches wider than shoulder width. If you have shoulder problems, this is not an option and you will need to grab the bar wider.

Never grab the bar with an extremely close grip or extremely wide grip if you can help it. Moderate grip width is best. Try to get your elbows under the bar as much as possible. This will help keep you in a more upright position and prevent the lift from turning into a "good morning". How far under the bar you can get your elbows will be determined by your shoulder mobility. Do the best you can without putting any excess stress on your shoulders.

Now, to engage your lats, pull down on the bar just a bit. You should feel your lats flare out to the side.

With your head straight, chest up and back arched, take a deep breath and hold it then un-rack the weight and take two steps back. Your feet should be a bit wider than shoulder width apart and rotated out about thirty degrees. Think of an athletic stance.

THE DESCENT

Before beginning your descent take a huge breath and fill your belly with air. Hold the air in your abdomen, not your chest. Basically you want to push your abs out as far as you can while also bracing them like you're going to take a punch. If you wear a belt simply drive your abs out into the belt.

With your chest up and back arched, you are now going to push out on the sides of your feet like you are trying to spread the floor. This doesn't have to be dramatic, but just enough to engage the hips and glutes.

To begin your descent, break at the hips by pushing your glutes back and then squatting down as low as you can go without allowing your lower back to round or your butt to tuck under. If your butt tucks under and you go into spinal flexion the injury risk increases dramatically and you lose a lot of strength. You need to maintain a neutral spine throughout. If you can't, you need to seriously work on your flexibility and mobility. The goal is to be able to break parallel while maintaining a neutral spine.

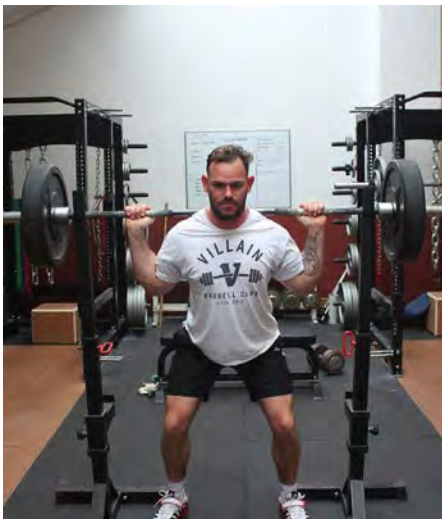
One thing you need to remember is to keep your knees tracking your toes. So on the way down you need to consciously drive your knees out. Probably the best coaching clue I have heard that makes this easy to remember and grasp, is that squatting takes place BETWEEN the legs, not above them. Really open up your knees as much as you can. Doing this makes it easier to maintain a neutral spine at the bottom.

GETTING OUT OF THE HOLE

When you can get to parallel without spinal flexion the fun is just beginning. Now you have to get back up. When coming out of the hole be sure to lead with your head, driving backwards into the bar but NOT looking up. In other words, you drive straight back into the bar but keep staring straight ahead. Don't cock your neck back, as this will make you weaker and throw off your form.

Your chest should be high and you should drive your elbows forward and under the bar and push your hips forward while consciously engaging the glutes. On the way up you need to keep holding that deep breath until you are at least half way up. At that point you can start hissing the air out as if you're blowing it through a straw. Never let your air out before that or let all of it out before reaching the top position. Pause at the top, let all your air out, gather yourself, go through the checklist, take another huge breath and do your next rep. Do not do piston style pump reps when squatting unless you're very experienced and are doing a light, higher rep back-off set.

Now you know how to squat properly. Good luck. Squat big.



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BULL TERRIER 'BLACK BULL' KIMONO

Bull Terrier gis have long been known as some of the most bling products available on the market, often coming in with a bling price tag to match. However, Bull Terrier gis are also known for being damn near indestructible, extremely comfy and wearing one will increase your jiu jitsu skills by 2.3%...

Ok, we lied about the last part, the gi won't make you any better at jiu jitsu, but wearing one will make you feel like a complete badass. Unlike many popular Bull Terrier kimonos, such as their 'N Super Material' or 'New Star' products, the Black Bull jacket's exterior is pretty minimalist in appearance. Our white sample comes complete with deep grey and black branding on the upper arms, a small patch at the bottom of the left jacket panel and the trademark Bull Terrier logo located on the bottom of the left lapel. That said, regular Bull Terrier fans won't be disappointed, with two large offset patches on the back of the jacket adding a little flair to proceedings.

The real detail within this product is hidden inside the jacket, which boasts full rashguard lining and an epic grim reaper/black bulldog illustration. The artwork is simply awesome, and if you've never worn a rashguard lined gi before, you're missing out. It's like wearing a silk bathrobe on the mats!

The ripstop trousers hold no surprises, with the white cotton featuring black contrast stitching and a black drawstring fastening system. The top right hip section includes another Black Bull patch, and the regular Bull Terrier sizing logo.

Our A2 sample came in just a little bit big on our 5ft 8in reviewer, with the trousers just slightly long. This could be partly due to our subject's short, stocky body type, so we'd suggest just ordering your regular size when choosing a Bull Terrier gi.

The Black Bull is a limited edition product, which is still available in small quantities via ***www.mmawarehouse.com*** for $214. However, keep an eye on ***www.btfightgear.com*** for re-runs of this product and all future Bull Terrier releases.

CHOQUE - THE UNTOLD STORY OF JIU-JITSU IN BRAZIL 1856-1949 BY ROBERTO PEDREIRA

Writer Roberto Pedreira delves into Brazilian newspaper archives in a quest to uncover as much verifiable information about the origin of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu as possible. Along the way, he uncovers some uncomfortable truths that may alter your perception over who did what, where and when between 1856 and 1949.

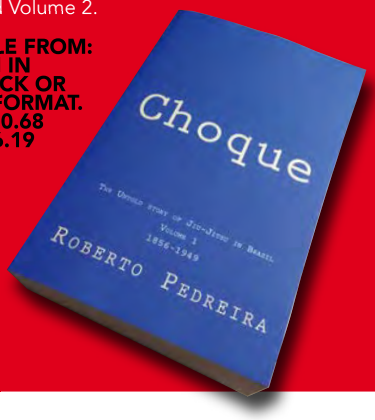
Roberto Pedreira is most commonly known as the author behind Global Training Report - one of the earliest online blogs in the English language about Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Many of those early articles are compiled into Pedreira's first book, *Jiu Jitsu in the South Zone*. This book, *Choque*, is his second publication.

Choque is written in chronological order. Paragraphs are written with a summary recall of the facts as they would have appeared in the original newspaper article. Pedreira then fills in between with his thoughts on what may or may not have happened. Often, the author has to introduce certain key people and jump around with dates in order to explain a certain fact or event, but largely, he sticks with the year in question. Quite often, in subsequent chapters, Pedreira will repeat a fact or explain something that he has already explained before. About a third of the book consists of the appendix of footnotes and references. There are also photographs, newspaper clippings and a glossary of words and techniques.

Pedreira leaves no stone unturned in his quest to pinpoint events. The main revelations appear surrounding the authenticity behind many of Carlos Gracie's self-professed claims to fame - notably his many years of training with Count Koma, which appear to be fabrications. There are also descriptions of violent assaults, match rigging and lots more fascinating incidents among other key characters involved in the early days of jiu jitsu in Brazil.

At 744 pages, *Choque* is a weighty volume and much of it consists of lists of names, fights and other accounts of raw data culled from newspaper reports and adverts. It all adds up to an essential read for any self-respecting BJJ enthusiast and sets the scene for an eagerly anticipated Volume 2.

AVAILABLE FROM: AMAZON IN PAPERBACK OR DIGITAL FORMAT. PRICE: £10.68 BOOK, £6.19 KINDLE EDITION



BEYOND TECHNIQUE DVD BY KIT DALE AND NIC GREGORIADES

Kit Dale is Australia's most decorated competitor, with multiple national titles supporting his status as 2x WPJJC champion and Metamoris fighter. Nic Gregoriades is Roger Gracie's first black belt, founder of the Jiu Jitsu Brotherhood and co-founder of The Journey Podcast.

Although both individuals have had competitive success they are probably as well known for their popular social media internet content; Nic for his brand The Jiu Jitsu Brotherhood and Kit for his humorous online videos. This duo has paired up to share their thoughts behind how they think jiu jitsu should be trained.

This DVD is short compared to most instructionals on the market. At nearly 56 minutes long, the disc examines jiu jitsu techniques from a conceptual viewpoint. The two instructors alternate on the video teaching concepts one at a time. Although there are techniques shown, these are used merely to illustrate the concept being discussed. The theory being that understanding concepts will allow the student to apply these to a much wider array of techniques.

The concepts covered include tips on transitional movement, leverage, stability, using body structure effectively, dealing with different body sizes and weights, hip movement and many others. In total, there are 20 concepts explored and for most, there are two techniques shown for each concept; that's a rough total of 40 techniques. The titles for each concept evoke easy to remember visuals for simple recall. Often, Nic or Kit will refer to a previous concept that the other has taught.

Beyond Technique feels like being at a lecture. The content is fascinating and helps to open the mind. As it isn't as long as many instructional DVDs, in many respects it feels like a supplement DVD; a bookend to something much more substantial. At $59 however, it is good value.

AVAILABLE IN DVD FORMAT ($59.99) OR DIGITAL DOWNLOAD ($49.99) AT: WWW.GOBEYONDTECHNIQUE.COM

BREAK 'MAT OR BOARD' SHORTS

Break is a brand new company on the scene with deep roots in both jiu jitsu and surf culture. Their launch products include a range of stylish t-shirts, a rashguard and these multi-purpose shorts, which are really making waves within the community. See what we did there?

Joking aside, Break's debut shorts are sure to be a big hit. Though constructed to withstand the ordeal of tough grappling sessions, they are styled perfectly to keep you looking cool outside the academy and at the beach. We really loved the black colouring, offset with light blue around the bottom of the legs. The Break 'Shaka' logo is embroidered on the rear left section of the leg and also printed on the front strap. Let's face it, we all love the 'Shaka' symbol, and it couldn't be more fitting for a surf/jiu jitsu crossover brand.

We were really impressed by just how quickly the shorts dried straight out of the wash. Though this isn't often a huge deciding factor when buying grappling or board shorts it's a real plus in our books, ideal for travellers or people who are generally on the run.

Though these shorts are designed for both grappling and surfing, they certainly hold up on the mat as well as any product we've tested. In fact, their lightness made them a lot more breathable than some of the heavier products on the market, which does come into play when you're six rolls in and sweating like a dog.

Coming in at £36 per pair, you can't really argue about value for money here, and we would recommend Break's debut in the fight shorts realm as a solid purchase.

AVAILABLE VIA WWW.BREAKBJJSURF.COM FOR £36

SPIDER JIU JITSU BAG

Spider Jiu Jitsu is becoming known as a great value brand, but that does not mean their products are of a low quality by any stretch of the imagination. They have just introduced their first backpack, following on from their great quality gis.

We were very much looking forward to reviewing the backpack, and the first thing we noticed is the great build quality. The bulk of the backpack is made of black gi material, which means this won't rip anytime soon unlike some similarly priced sports bags. Another great feature is the reinforced areas on the sides and bottom that use a ripstop material, so this means these areas are scuff and rip resistant - the bag should hold up to many years of travelling to training.

The bag has one large main storage compartment and, in our test, fitted two single weave A3 gis. This pushed the bag to its limits, but going to training with a single gi will be easy with some space to spare.

The second pocket is more for accessories such as tape, a small water bottle and other small BJJ essentials. Larger water bottles will fit, but would have to stick out of the top.

In testing, the only real negatives were the straps. They are quite narrow with not much padding, which on long journeys became slightly uncomfortable. Also the addition of a side water bottle section would make this even easier to recommend.

All in all we found the bag to be good for single training sessions but for travel or those tough multiple training days you may be better off looking for a slightly larger bag. Overall, a great product for your everyday trip to the gym.

AVAILABLE FROM: WWW.SPIDERJIUJITSU.COM FOR £35

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GI SPOTLIGHT | ROLL SUPREME THE BASE II

OVERVIEW

Having recently launched their first ever kimono, The Base, Roll Supreme have quickly followed on with the launch of The Base II, a sleek, all black gi with subtle design elements and sturdy construction. Roll Supreme have quickly built up a reputation for their unique design elements and simple use of branding – The Base II is no exception.

JACKET

Described as 'athletic fit', the jacket feels like it's been tailored like a business suit! Unlike many old school, judo-like jackets, The Base II is fitted in all the right areas, with no unwanted material flapping around for keen spider guard players to grab hold of. Made of 470gsm pearl weave, the kimono is very sturdy and held up great during training. Many fitted jackets lose marks for longevity if worn regularly, but The Base II is built to endure those rugged competition training sessions for plenty of time to come.

The branding consists of two white Roll Supreme patches on the upper arms, and a 'B2' logo on the base of the left lapel. The black pearl weave is offset nicely with white contrast stitching.

TROUSERS

The 10oz ripstop trousers include two patches on both upper thighs: a 'B2' design similar to that on the jacket lapel and 'The Base II" wording and size details. The rope drawstring closure system comes in a vibrant orange; the only area of bright colour on the whole kimono. This slice of orange really does catch the eye and works really well with the black and deep grey elements on the product.

The trousers fitted our 5ft 8in reviewer perfectly out of the bag, sitting right on the anklebone. After four washes there was minimal shrinkage, with the trousers finally sitting just above the anklebone.

DETAILS

Roll Supreme designs have always been extremely tasteful, and often pretty simplistic. For us, the use of a black kimono, deep grey detailing and a hint of bold colour with the rope drawstring makes this gi an extremely classy product.

The jacket lapels also require special mention, as they appear thicker and sturdier than your regular jiu jitsu gi. A number of training partners commented on the difficulty they had in securing a solid choking grip on The Base II, which was just fine by our reviewer!

SUMMARY

In summary, The Base II is a very impressive offering considering it's only Roll Supreme's second kimono. The clear attention to detail from both the design and construction perspectives really do shine through, and we found the jacket in particular to fit as comfortably as any we've tested.

If you're looking for a minimalistic black kimono that still offers great design details, this is the gi for you. Coming in at £98, we'd say you are getting great value for money.

AVAILABLE VIA

WWW.ROLLSUPREME.COM

FOR £98

TOURNAMENT REVIEW

WORDS: JON SHOTTER PICTURES: WILLIAM BURKHARDT

IBJJF WORLD NOGI CHAMPIONSHIPS

October 4th and 5th saw the 8th annual IBJJF NoGi Mundials at the familiar Walter Pyramid in Long Beach, California. From a relatively modest competitor list rather lacking in "Star Power" in the first few editions, the event now draws hundreds of competitors and a reasonable number of the elite players, (albeit still some way off the ADCC Championships and with very few elite female competitors).

This event has also seen a higher proportion of non-Brazilian winners than most of the other major tournaments, with the likes of Hillary Williams, Emily Kwok, Gazzy Parman, Penny Thomas, Jeff Glover, Jeff Monson, Josh Barnett, Justin Rader and Rafael Lovato Jr; all former champions.

Unlike the gi equivalent, the NoGi Mundials has the full range of age divisions, bringing out a few (certainly fewer than last year) notable names from MMA and grappling from the older generation, such as Renato "Babalu", Jack McVicker, Chris Brennan and Givanildo Santana.

The black belt male finals saw some incredible handshake attacks for four tedious teammate close-outs. It would have been five but for AJ Agazarm and Rodrigo de Freitas electing to contest their final.

Last but not least, the weekend saw the UK's own Tom Barlow from Gracie Barra Plymouth take his second consecutive gold in the Masters black belt featherweight category. Well done Tom!

.

-55 kg

Final: Caio Terra (Brasa CTA) beat David B. Zennario (Vicente Junior BJJ) by rear choke

Bronze: n/a

-61 kg

Final: Joao Ricardo Bordignon Miyao (PSLPB Cicero Costha) beat Thomas Lincoln Correa Lisboa (Alliance) by points (10x4)

Bronze: Joao Pedro Oliveira Rodrigues (Checkmat) and Fabbio Passos de Alencar (Alliance))

-67 kg

Final: Samir Jose Chantre Dahas (Brasa CTA) beat Osvaldo Augusto Honorio Moizinho (Brasa CTA) by gentlemen's agreement

Bronze: Carlos Vieira Holanda (Checkmat) and Gianni Grippo (Alliance)

-73 kg

Final: AJ Agazarm (Gracie Barra) beat Rodrigo Lamounier de Freitas (Gracie Barra) by points (2x0)

Bronze: Rafael Domingos Benedito (Zenith BJJ) and Jayson Alexis Patino (American Top Team)

-79 kg

Final: Marcelo França Mafra (Checkmat) beat Thiago Aragao de Abreu (Checkmat) via gentlemen's agreement

Bronze: Enrico Daniel Cocco (Fight Sports) and Ben Henderson (Soul Fighters BJJ Arizona)

REIGNING CHAMPIONS

MALE

ABSOLUTE
YURI SIMOES

+97kg
YURI SIMOES

-97kg
JOAO ASSIS

-91kg
LUCAS LEITE

-85kg
KEENAN CORNELIUS

-79kg
MARCELO MAFRA

-73kg
AJ AGAZARM

-67kg
SAMIR CHANTRE

-61kg
JOAO MIYAO

-55kg
CAIO TERRA

FEMALE

ABSOLUTE
GABRIELLE GARCIA

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT
GABRIELLE GARCIA

HEAVYWEIGHT
ANDRESA CORREA

MIDDLEWEIGHT
LUIZA MONTEIRO

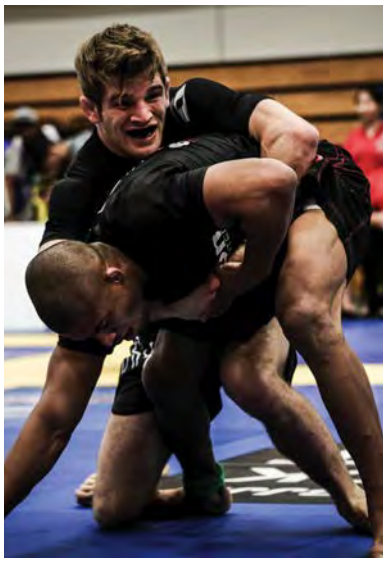
LIGHTWEIGHT
SOPHIA DRYSDALE

FEATHERWEIGHT
MACKENZIE DERN

-85 kg

Final: Keenan Cornelius (Atos Jiu-Jitsu) beat Arnaldo Maidana de Oliveira (Checkmat) by choke

Bronze: Murilo Silva Ferreira de Santana (Barbosa Jiu Jitsu) and Claudio de Mattos Cardoso (Gracie Barra)



-91 kg

Final: Lucas Joas Gomes Leite (Checkmat) beat Jackson Sousa dos Santos (Checkmat) via gentlemen's agreement

Bronze: Mauro Celso Santiago (Gracie Barra) and Timothy-Michael Spriggs (Team Lloyd Irvin)

-97 kg

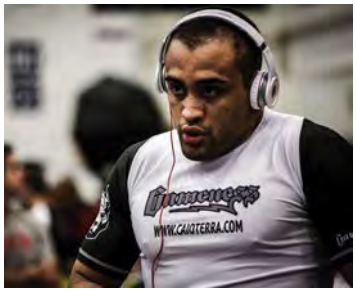
Final: Joao Francisco de Moraes Assis (Checkmat) beat Luiz Fernando de Azevedo Panza (Checkmat) via gentlemen's agreement

Bronze: James Richard Puopolo (Ribeiro Jiu-Jitsu) and Roger Luiz Pereira Ambrosi (Ryan Gracie Team)

Final: Yuri Costa Simoes M. da Silva (Brasa CTA) beat Gabriel Lyrio Lucas (Checkmat) by points (2x0)

+97 kg

Bronze: Rodrigo Leite de Medeiros (Brasa CTA) and Abraham J. Marte Messina (Yamasaki Academy International)



Absolute

Final: Yuri Costa Simoes M. da Silva (Brasa CTA) beat Keenan Cornelius (Atos Jiu-Jitsu) by points (4x0)

Bronze: Garry Lee Tonon (Gracie Elite Team America) and Bernardo Augusto Rocha de Faria (Alliance)

FEMALE RESULTS

FEATHERWEIGHT

Final: Mackenzie Lynne Dern (Gracie Humaita) beat Karen Deisy Antunes Souza (Checkmat) by toehold

Bronze Medals: n/a

LIGHTWEIGHT

Final: Sophia J Drysdale (Zenith BJJ (Las Vegas) won unopposed

Bronze Medals: n/a

MIDDLEWEIGHT

Final: Luiza Monteiro Moura da Costa (PSLPB Cicero Costha) beat Nyjah Easton (Team Lloyd Irvin) by toehold

Bronze Medals: Leanna M Dittrich (Fight Sports)

HEAVYWEIGHT

Final: Andresa Correa (Alliance) beat Sijara Jihan Eubanks (Team Lloyd Irvin)

Bronze Medals: n/a

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT

Final: Gabrielle Lemos Garcia (Alliance) won unopposed

Bronze Medals: n/a

ABSOLUTE

Final: Gabrielle Lemos Garcia (Alliance) beat Mackenzie Lynne Dern (Gracie Humaita) by Americana

Bronze Medals: Leanna M Dittrich (Fight Sports) and (Luiza Monteiro Moura da Costa (PSLPB Cicero Costha)

PASSING NOTES

A Q&A on the pressing topics in the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu world.

THE BEARD - WHAT IS IT?

Excessive facial hair, usually grown by men.

AGE?

Since time began...well since man first became man.

YES I HAVE NOTICED RECENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN A BIG INCREASE IN BEARDS ON THE BJJ SCENE; ARE WE RUNNING OUT OF SHAVING FOAM?

Beards these days are all part of what some like to call the Hipster scene

AHA, I KNOW HIPS ARE IMPORTANT IN BJJ, AND THEY CERTAINLY DON'T LIE, ACCORDING TO POPSTREL SHAKIRA.

Hips don't lie indeed, but these days being hipster is all about trying to minimise personal grooming while looking cool.

SURELY, THE WHOLE POINT OF PERSONAL GROOMING IS TO LOOK COOL?

Growing a meaty beard is character forming…and it certainly gets you noticed. Look at Kit Dale.

I'D LOVE TO, BUT I CAN'T SEE HIM FOR ALL THAT BUSH.

I mean look at how his beard is all part of his online persona and defines his character.

OH, BUT DOES IT MAKE YOUR JIU JITSU ANY BETTER?

I guess if looking more manly gives you the extra boost of self confidence you need, then yes. Mind you, he's just shaved his off so there's goes that!

IT'S NOT JUST KIT, IT SEEMS EVERYONE IN THE FIGHT WORLD IS BEARDING UP; HAVE THEY LITERALLY NOT HEARD OF A RAZOR?

Well among well known BJJ fighters I can probably only recall Robert Drysdale or Tarsis Humphreys as fully bearded black belt competitors, or maybe Dean Lister sometimes. But if you look at mixed martial arts there are many famously hirsute fighters from Tank Abbott to Brock Lesnar, from Roy 'Big Country' Nelson to Johnny Hendricks! Heck, how could you even overlook the greatest bearded one of them all...Chuck Norris!

GOOD GRIEF, WELL I BLAME THE MOVIE *300, AND SPARTACUS* AND ANCIENT GREEKS, ALL VERY SUSPICIOUSLY BEARDED.

DO SAY

My, what immense chin follicles you have.

DON'T SAY

How often do you wash that beard?

THE BASE II

CONTINUING TO GROW AND DEVELOP

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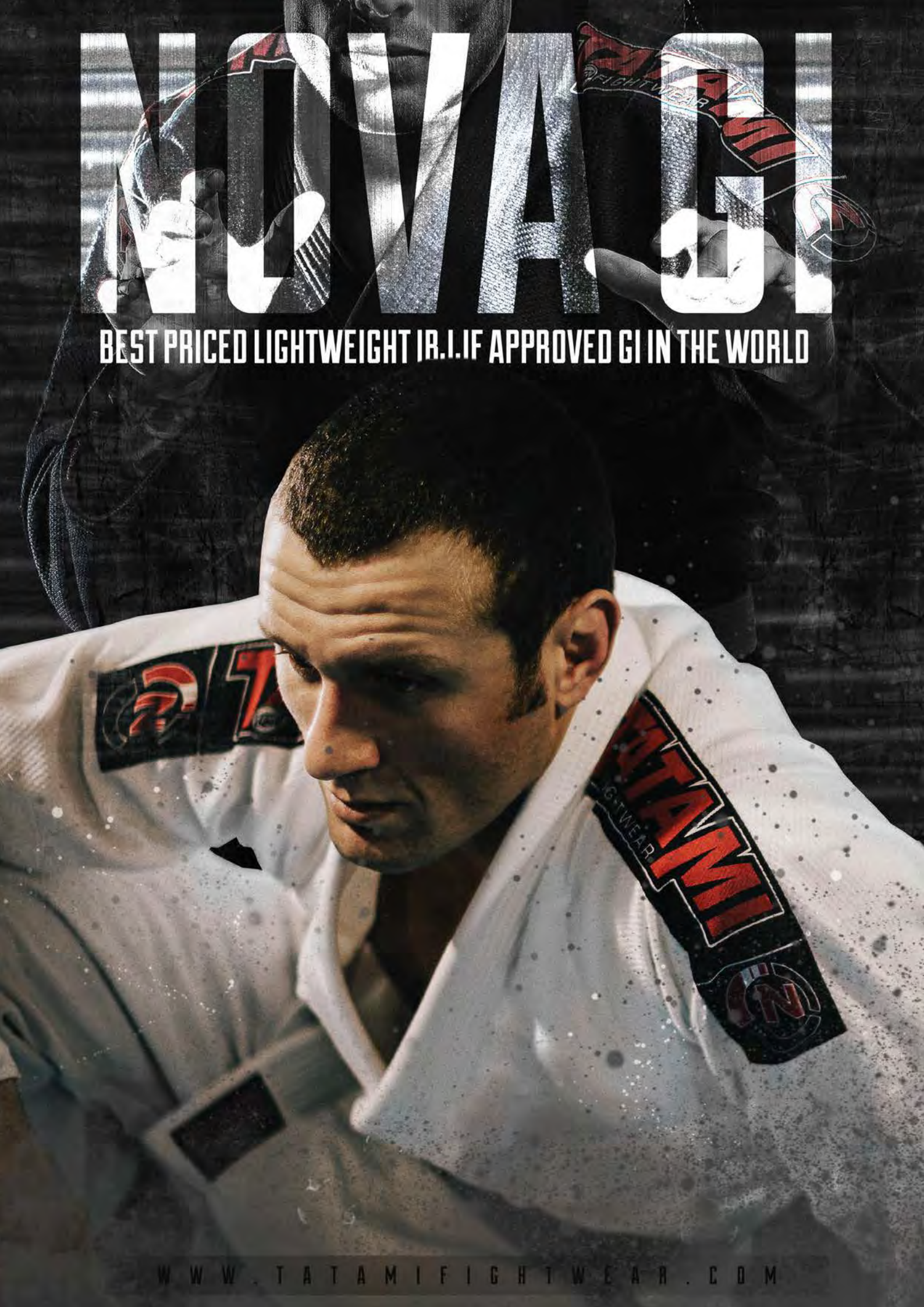
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